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Part I
A Century in Retrospect

Chapter 1
The Origins and Precursors to Chinese Comparative Literature: Lin Shu—Wang Guowei—Lu Xun—the Xue Heng School

1.1 Chinese Comparative Literature Originates from the Translation of Foreign Literature

Chinese comparative literature is not a branch of European and American comparative literature, nor did it originate from university lecterns like the American and European schools of comparative literature. In June of 1987, the first president of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association, Professor Yang Zhouhan of Peking University's English Department, delivered an enthralling lecture titled "The Past and Present of Chinese Comparative Literature" at the annual conference of the Japan Comparative Literature Association in Kyoto. It can be said that this was a major global debut for China's newly emerging school of comparative literature. He stressed two defining characteristics of the rise of Chinese comparative literature, stating, "I have analysed the differences in origin between Chinese and Western comparative literature. Western comparative literature originated in institutions, whereas Chinese comparative literature is closely related to political and social reform movements and was an integral part of those activities."[1] Yang also identified another source of the Chinese school as the "interpretation of Chinese literature and culture through imported theories." He believed that a heightened historical awareness and a desire to get to the bottom of everything is a salient feature of the minds of Chinese scholars. "This type of cultural training means that scholars are able to recognize the influence of foreign literature on Chinese literature, or elements of Chinese literature in foreign literature, and so they naturally seek to explore this."[2]

Overall, from his perspective, Chinese comparative literature is an indigenous product, and its emergence was demanded by China's own literary development. It is where Chinese and Western cultures meet and a result of China's economic,

[1]Yang Zhouhan, *Jingzi he qiqiaoban* [The mirror and the jigsaw puzzle] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1990), p. 5.
[2]Ibid., p. 7.

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political, social and cultural development. The birth of Chinese comparative literature is inseparable from the desire to revive the nation and to renew and develop its literature. It started with the introduction of foreign literature, and strove for a rediscovery of the Self in the light of foreign literature, seeking a new path for development. Its foundations, however, fundamentally lie in Chinese society and time-honored Chinese literary traditions. We will explore this further below under three topics.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the more perceptive Chinese intellectuals felt a strong need to broaden their horizons, face the world and to learn from its many cultures. In the practical necessity of awakening the masses, literature, and in particular, fiction, received unprecedented attention. At the time it was commonly accepted by progressive intellectuals that "to renovate a nation, you must first renovate its fiction."[3] After the failure of the Hundred Days Reform in 1898, Yan Fu, for instance, emphasized that "Without an educated populace, then neither restoration nor reform can succeed." An important element in this mass education was for the people to come to know both China and the West better and thus "ensure that the number of individuals cognizant of the true situation in both China and the West grows day by day." He thus "abandoned all other pursuits and made translation [his] sole mission."[4] In 1897, when he established the *Guowen News* in Tianjin, he wrote an article with Xia Zengyou entitled "Our reasons for establishing the Guowen News" in which they pointed out that "the rise of Euro-America and Japan was invariably assisted by the role of fiction." At that time, Kang Youwei, after investigating the publishing market in Shanghai, wrote in a poem, "I visited the bookstores in Shanghai, and what were the bestsellers? Eight-legged essays were outselling the classics, but fiction was trumping the eight-legged essay. Frivolous music prospers and elegant music declines, in which situation only the sagely refuse to go with the flow."[5] This poem shows how much he valued the educational function of fiction. Liang Qichao has even more to say on this topic. In 1898 in his *Introduction to Translating Political Fiction* he states: "Of those who can read, some do not read the classics, but there are none who do not read fiction. Therefore, if we are not able to teach the six classics, we ought to use fiction to teach them and if readers are not able to acquaint themselves with official histories, then we ought to acquaint them with it through fiction. If the sayings [of the ancients] cannot be instilled [into the young] then we ought to use fiction to achieve this, and if the laws are ineffectual, fiction can encourage compliance." Liang Qichao went on to conclude: "To renovate nation's citizens, one must first renovate its fiction, because to renovate a nation's morality you must have new fiction; if you want to renovate a nation's religion, you need new fiction; if you want a new polity,

[3]Liang Qichao, "Lun xiao shuo yu qun zhi zhi guan xi," in the inaugural edition of *Xin xiao shuo* [New Fiction], November 1902.

[4]Letter to Zhang Yuanji. Original held in the Shanghai Library.

[5]"Wen shi yuan ju shiyu wei zheng bian shuo bu shi yu su zhi," *Kang Youwei shiwen xuan* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1958).

you need new fiction; if you want new social customs, new art and learning, you need new fiction; in fact if you need a new conscience, a new dignity, you need a new fiction; And why? It is because fiction has a profound power to complement the way of man."[6] For him, fiction was a weapon in social reform and it should take on the important responsibility of forming a new character, a new conscience, new customs, new art, even a new morality, religion and polity. Traditional fiction was certainly not able to fulfill this solemn task, so new fiction must be introduced from the West, and especially political fiction. In 1903, Xia Zengyou (1863–1924) published a 5000-character article entitled "Principles of Fiction" in the third issue of *Fiction with Illustrations*, maintaining that "the pleasure of reading fiction is as fundamental to humankind as is food and sex." He went on to conclude that in order to introduce Western culture, we must first introduce Western fiction: "If you want to introduce its culture then there is no way other than via its fiction." So, it is obvious that the rise of foreign fiction translation is not without its causes and is closely linked to the historical imperative of revitalizing the Chinese nation, educating the people and raising the cultural quality of the populace.

Under these circumstances the translation and introduction of foreign fiction proliferated. According to the *Hanfenlou Catalogue of New Books*, in the period between the Hundred Days Reform[7] and 1911, more than 600 pieces of translated fiction appeared in China.[8] In 1908, the publisher Xu Nianci published "A Survey of Fiction Published in 1907" in *Fiction Forest*. According to his statistics, there were 80 pieces of translated fiction in the year 1907 alone. Among these were 32 British, 22 American, 9 French, 8 Japanese, 2 Russian, and 7 other works. During this ten-year period, five major magazines devoted to fiction appeared, including Liang Qichao's *New Fiction* (first published in 1902), Li Boyuan's *Illustrated Fiction* (1903), Leng Xiao's *New Fiction* (1904), Wu Jianren and Zhou Guisheng's *Fiction Monthly* (1906), and Huang Moxi's (Huang Ren) *Fiction Forest* (1907), all of which carried a large amount of foreign fiction. In the first decade of the twentieth century, besides the renowned translator Lin Shu, there was also Su Manzhu who translated *Les Misérables* and *Selected Poems by Byron*, Ma Junwu who translated *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, *The Song of the Shirt* (Thomas Hood), and the play *William Tell* (Schiller), as well as Chen Zufen who translated *Robinson Crusoe*, and Wu Guangjian who was the first to translate *The Story of the Hidden Warrior* into vernacular Chinese. These translated works all attracted the interest of a wide reader base.

Translated literature, due to its transcultural nature, is in itself an integral part of the comparative literature. The initial translation and study of literature during this period was largely based on the commonalities that existed between Chinese and

[6]Liang Qichao, "Xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi," *Yin bing shi wen ji* 10, p. 6.

[7]A failed 103–day national cultural, political and educational reform movement which lasted 11 June to 21 September 1898.

[8]According to A Ying's statistics in Guan Lin and Zhong Xianpei (eds.), *Zhongguo jindai wenxue fazhan shi* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chuban gongsi, 1991).

Western literature, because at that time, if there had been nothing in common, there would have been no point in translating it, nor would there be any chance of convergence or cross-referencing. At the time, most people believed that the most salient common feature of Western and Chinese literature was that literature should serve to revitalize and educate its people and raise the cultural quality of the populace. In 1902, Liang Qichao pointed out that "This is true of human beings of all nationalities and not just the Chinese alone."[9] In addition, regular contributor to *New Fiction*, Jin Songcen, took a step further in pointing out that literature was a channel for linking Chinese and Western culture. He wrote: "For human beings to be born with emotions, this is the same for both Eastern and Western peoples. For expressions of emotions in literature, this is also true for both East and West. It is the men of letters' responsibility to link up the common emotions of East and West through fiction."[10] An early author of *A History of Chinese Literature*, Huang Ren (1869–1913, original given name Zhenyuan and alias Moxi or Moses) also pointed out "Peoples north and south are of the same mind and share these same values." He believed that "Although the customs of East and West are far apart and unique, nevertheless they, by necessity, share things in common. For example, while the Greek myths and the *Arabian Nights* may appear absurd to us, nevertheless their imaginary landscape finds resonance with all of our own mythical tales. Because people are similar in their overall evolution, they cannot be seen as alien to one another."[11] "Similar in their overall evolution" refers to a similar evolutionary process and because the literature of different cultures can share common aspects, the fact that Huang Ren pointed this out at the time is extremely significant. In sum, at the time, in such literary publications as *New Fiction* and *Fiction Forest*, we often observe such expressions as "The ten winds share the same emotions," "The five continents share one room," "The four seas share a common language," or "Fiction is stateless," and they all emphasize that the literatures of different cultures all have points in common.

Throughout the discourse on the translation of fiction, the most frequent topic was the use of Western literature as a model for discovering the distinctive features or weaknesses in the development of Chinese literature, in a quest for even greater (literary) development. For example, Zhou Guisheng, editor of *Fiction Monthly*, while translating foreign fiction, often practiced this. In the "translator's notes" to a detective novel by the French writer du Boisgobey he states: "Our nation's fiction follows a pattern of first outlining the hero's genealogy and background and only then listing his accomplishments; otherwise it uses a prologue, an introduction, a glossary, or a list of quotations in order to round it off. If [the work] is not presented in this way, then [the reader] will fail to find his bearings." French fiction, on the

[9]Liang Qichao, "Xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi," p. 8. English translation according to Gek Nai Cheng in his translation "On the Relationship between Fiction and the Government of the People" by Liang Qichao in pp. 74–81 of Kirk A. Denton (ed.), *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature 1893–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

[10]"Lun xieqing xiaoshuo yu xinshehui zhi guanxi," *Xin xiaoshuo* [New Fiction], Issue 17.

[11]"Xiaoshuo xiao hua," see *Xiao shuo lin* [Fiction Forest], Vol. 9, 1908.

other hand, "emerges on the page as if from nowhere, indistinct like mysterious peaks, towering and sudden, as if arriving from outer space; or like when a firecracker is lit, sparks fly everywhere, but if you look closely, everything is orderly." Lin Shu was even more prone to highlight the differences between Chinese and Western fiction in the forewords to his translations. He would reflect on Chinese literature from the viewpoint of the creativity of Western literature and point out the shortcomings of Chinese literature. For example, he would compare the difference in content between Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *A Dream of Red Mansions* or the difference in structure between *David Copperfield* and *Water Margin*. All the shortcomings in Chinese literature that Lin Shu raised came from an analysis of the Western works that he translated, all in the name of promoting the reform of Chinese literature. From 1904 onwards, *New Fiction* magazine's *Discussions on Fiction* section also often carried a number of contrasting views such as Su Manshu's notion that "There are often very few characters in Euro-American fiction, but in Chinese there are many; Euro-American fiction invariably narrates the life story of one or two individuals, whilst Chinese fiction predominately narrates a type of social history." Su Manshu also states that: "Our fiction mostly depicts events in the past while Euro-American fiction describes contemporary figures."[12] There were also those who argued that Western fiction was superior to Chinese fiction, saying: "Whenever I read a Chinese novel it's just like a trip through a park. As soon as you enter the gate, then the whole landscape is laid out in front of you; but when I read a foreign novel, it's like visiting one of China's famous gardens and it's impossible to see the whole vista and I am unable to sense any single overarching flavour."[13] Later Cheng Zhi (Lü Simian) also offered some analysis of the difference in narrative styles between Chinese and Western fiction that merit our attention. He said: "The narrative of a novel can be divided into subjective and objective categories. In the subjective category, the stories are narrated by the protagonist, who most likely is the author himself… Most Western novels belong to this category (and most of the novels translated in recent years also belong to this category). Meanwhile Chinese novels belong to a category where… the narrator remains external to the stories." Although this kind of discussion can never be comprehensive and is unavoidably biased, however, the practice of reflecting on one's own literature by comparing it with that of others or by recognizing characteristics of one's own literature that are difficult to recognize because of its very closed nature, is why comparative literature later came to be known as one aspect of elucidatory research and is also the beginning of a "mutual recognition" between the two cultures.

Translation is the vanguard of communication between two cultures, with the study of translation as the core of the media/medium studies component of traditional comparative literature. There is a wealth of theoretical achievement and practical experience in the field of translation studies in China. Especially against

[12] *Xin xiaoshuo*, Issue 11, 1905.

[13] *Xiaoshuo cong hua*, ibid., Issue 20, 1905.

the expansive backdrop of international translation, Chinese translation can be seen as highly accomplished. As early as 1894, Ma Jianzhong, who was proficient in English, French, and many other languages, suggested that a "Translation Academy" be established to train specialized translation talent. In his "Proposal to Establish a Translation Academy,"[14] he emphasized the need for "treasuring the words of both nations and pondering over each paragraph, sentence by sentence and word by word, discovering the origins of the two languages and finding the reason for the similarities and differences between them." He also emphasized the importance of "Probing the high and low pitch of its tone and voice, analyzing the simplicity and richness of its words and expressions, understanding the variations of its genres, and asking why the essence of its argument is so deep and profound." He also advocated "imitating its spirit and feeling," and "replicating its tone." He demanded that "the translation must conform to the work being translated" and "never deviating one iota from the source." Only then can it be termed "a superior translation."At the turn of the century, Yan Fu advocated the three great principles of "Faithfulness, [Adequate] Transmission and Elegance,"[15] which to this day remain the goal of Chinese translators. At the beginning of the last century, because the translations of Yan Fu, Liang Qichao, and even people like Lin Shu, were among the earliest to experiment with and practice an understanding of Western original works within the framework of Chinese culture, they therefore held particular significance in terms of understanding the cultural differences between China and the West, the study of the problems associated with the convergence of Western and Chinese culture, and also in understanding the contradictions/conflicts between Chinese and Western culture.

In the study of early Chinese–Western cultural clashes, it is impossible not to mention another master of translation—Gu Hongming. In 1898, Shanghai's Biefa Company published Gu Hongming's English translation of the *Analects of Confucius*, subtitled "A unique translation which offers examples and explanations by Goethe and other authors." Wei Maoping's new work, *A Study on the History of the Chinese Translation of German Literature*, contains many interesting arguments pertinent to this. Gu Hongming's unique translation can be said to be the intermediary that allowed dialog between Confucius and Goethe, bridging the inordinate gap in time and space between the two. This kind of comparison is indeed novel, and it can also be seen as the emergence of a mutual affirmation and recognition between Chinese culture as represented by Confucius, and German culture as represented by Goethe. The emergence of this mutual affirmation and recognition was later used extensively in Qian Zhongshu's *Limited Views*.

[14]*Shi ke zhai ji yan*, Vol. 4.

[15]Translation adapted from Leo Tak–hung Chan (trans.), Ye Weilan/Wai-lim Yip, "Debunking claims of *Xin, Da and Ya*: The afterlife of translations," in Leo Tak-hung Chan, *Twentieth-Century Chinese Translation Theory: Modes, issues and debates* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2004), pp. 77–88.

1.2 Lin Shu's Contribution

Lin Shu did not know any foreign languages, yet his translated works occupy an inerasable place in contemporary translation history. In 1897, Lin Shu's wife passed away and Lin was completely grief-stricken. At that very time, Wang Ziren (who went by the pen-name Master of Daybreak Studio), a returnee from France, invited him to co-translate the French writer Alexandre Dumas' work *La Dame aux Camélias* [*The Lady of the Camellias*], a book which accurately reflected his melancholic mood at the time. Thus Wang Ziren, who was fluent in French, narrated the story, paragraph by paragraph, whilst Lin Shu, who understood no French but had a profound knowledge of Chinese culture and language, rendered it into elegant Chinese. The work, titled The Story of the Parisian Lady of the Camellias, was first published in Fuzhou in 1899 and caused a major stir, as Yan Fu's poem notes: "The single heart-wrenching volume of Lady of the Camellias broke the heart of China's romantics."[16] Chen Yuan, in his later biography of Lin Shu, writes: "When *The Story of the Parisian Lady of the Camellias* appeared, it was completely new to the Chinese public and its circulation easily reached ten thousand copies." It is obvious that its impact was considerable.

Once Lin Shu embarked on his translating enterprise, he was unstoppable. He translated some 156 Euro-American novels, of which 132 titles were published in single volumes, 10 appeared in volumes 6–11 of *Fiction Monthly* and 14 titles awaited publication. The works of English writers dominated Lin's translated fiction, comprising some 93 items, followed by 25 French novels, 19 American, 6 Russian, as well as Greek, Belgian, Swiss, Spanish, and Japanese works.[17] Included in this number were giants of Euro-American literature such as the works of William Shakespeare, Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Jonathan Swift, Charles Lamb, Charles Dickens, Walter Scott, Washington Irving, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Honore de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas (pere), Alexandre Dumas (fils), Henrik Ibsen, Aesop, Leo Tolstoy, and others. But the writer that Lin Shu translated most prolifically was H. Rider Haggard, including his *Joan Haste* and *Nada the Lily*, totaling 20 titles, followed by Arthur Conan Doyle (7 titles), including his *Sherlock Holmes*.

Lin Shu did not translate these novels just to amuse himself. First and foremost, he loved these novels, and was deeply touched by them. He would often be so deeply moved during the translation process that he would have to stop writing to wipe away his tears. For example, in his notes to Chapter 59 of *Dombey and Son: A Preface*, he states: "I am afraid that I have been brought to tears on three occasions already so far [whilst working on] this book." Furthermore, he viewed his literary translations as part of a much larger enterprise. As he noted: "The huge stream has dried up but the spring has not, so how could I not point this out? The wildfire has

[16]Poem by Yan Fu written in 1904 entitled "Leaving the capital and Mr. Lin Shu".

[17]Lin Shu's son-in-law Li Jiaji confirmed the number in 1955 as: total number 184, single volumes 137, unpublished 23, 8 extant manuscripts.

been extinguished but the stars still burn like a torch, so how could I not re-kindle it?"[18] Constantly surrounded by dry watercourses and witness to disappearing wildfires is an obvious reference to a gradually declining Chinese nation and its culture. Despite this, Lin Shu still believed that the spring would gush forth and that the spark would ignite a prairie fire! He felt compelled to dedicate his modest powers to the great enterprise of Chinese cultural renaissance. He reiterated these sentiments time and again in many of the forewords to his translations. For example in *Preface to Hototogisu* (*The Cuckoo*) he writes: "I am old and have no more time left to serve my country. But I would like to alert my compatriots, like here in the preface to this tale, and reveal my deepest thoughts." Right through to the venerable age of 70 he remained an ardent patriot. Naturally, apart from his patriotism, his curiosity about life and his intense interest in the joys and sorrows of the human condition spurred him to translate more than 180 works over a period of 20 years.

Lin Shu translated at a cracking pace, often completing his transcript before the narrator had even finished speaking. His ability to do this was closely tied to his own profound grounding in Chinese culture, as well as his extraordinary linguistic and literary ability. For a famous scholar, who was a master of the classical language of China's traditional culture, to attempt to translate foreign languages that he had no knowledge of whatsoever could only be described as a cultural spectacle unsurpassed either before or since. Under these circumstances, naturally, large numbers of inaccuracies and omissions crept into the translations. In his own words, "In a hurry to complete the work, I cannot guarantee that it is without error. A close friend has recently written to me warning me of certain errors, for which I am deeply grateful. I am not able to check the original text, only able to narrate, so there will be distortions and mistakes of which I am honestly unaware." But, from another perspective, it can also be said that this is perhaps exactly what made the very earliest stages of interaction between Chinese and Western literature such an extremely unique cultural phenomenon, sowing the seeds of Sino-Western comparative literature.

First of all, Lin Shu naturally drew comparisons between the Western fiction that he translated and Chinese fiction, believing that all literature had things in common. He believed, for instance, that: 1. The function of all fiction was to "expose the deep-rooted evil within society, [and to] use narrative as a vehicle of instruction." China ought to have novelists like Charles Dickens from whom society can benefit (Preface to *Oliver Twist*); 2. There is a congruence of subject matter: "In all the literary works in the world, it is most common to narrate tragedy, then war, then to articulate romance between a man and a woman" (Preface to *The Old Curiosity Shop*); 3. There are similarities in style: "There are haughty and unassuming types, delicate and imposing types, the grief-stricken and the lascivious: these are universal principles that neither Chinese nor foreigners can defy" (*ibid.*), etc.

In fact he often reflected on Chinese literature in his rendering of Western fiction, pointing out certain inadequacies in the former. For example, after

[18]Lin Shu, "Yi lin xu," see *Qing yi bao*, Issue 69 (November 1900).

translating Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop* he lamented the fact that China was yet to produce works which, like Dickens, could "Depict the foul and vile city life to a count of 200–300 thousand words or more." He said that *The Old Curiosity Shop* "does not repeat itself, nor is it diffuse; it is like a bright mirror in the sky reflecting myriad creatures, all of which are illuminated perfectly as if the reader were leaning on a parapet, observing fish or turtles, shrimp or crabs." He praised Dickens saying that his "clear and vivid depiction of place and narration of the murkiness of society has on innumerable occasions moved me tremendously." By contrast, China's fiction, "at its very finest, not unlike *A Dream of Red Mansions*" is concerned with "narrating earthly wealth and privilege and contemplating the vicissitudes of interpersonal relations, its composition contrived, its landscape garish, its delivery stilted, [but] a true masterpiece all the same. It is peppered with engaging characters, interspersed with common hags, stitched together with ruffians, and bound together by thugs. One could even say that it was rich in form and characterization; but in the final analysis, it is strong on elegance but lacks the common touch, so people are not captivated by it. Meanwhile, Dickens sweeps aside the worthies and belles and fantasy castles and moves the reader to laughter or rage, a moment of confusion such that [the reader] forgets himself, enthralled by the text. Are we, then, able to achieve this?" He further discusses the story of Dou Zhangjun in the *Book of History—Biographies of Maternal Relatives* and that of Bitter Peach from *The Northern Histories*, arguing that this writing style which "depicts everyday life" is already quite rare in China and that "Dickens deliberately writes about everyday life and matters relating to the bottom rungs of society, intentionally depicting hardship." On the question of structure, Lin Shu again compares the work of Dickens with *Water Margin*. He writes: "Shi Nai'an begins *Water Margin* by writing at length about Shi Jin and briefly depicting several dozen other men, each of them appearing in an orderly fashion with individual characteristics. But when the author finally reaches the latter part of his novel, the characters pour out onto the scene like a pack of coyotes, no longer distinguishable from one another. This is not only because his level of interest has waned and his talent has run dry, but also because his spirit has failed to endure long enough to penetrate the entire novel."[19]

Lin Shu's insights into these weaknesses in Chinese literature would not likely have been possible if it were not for his translations of these works of Western literature as a backdrop. Yet his goal was completely clear, as he had repeatedly emphasized: "There is no need to become enchanted by the winds from the West, to see Europeans as victorious over Asia." Only by "educating with energy will society improve satisfactorily" (*ibid.*). This was precisely the purpose of his translation work.

[19]Preface to *David Copperfield*. English translation taken from Yenna Wu (trans.) "Preface to Part One of *David Copperfield*" in Kirk A. Denton (ed.), *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature 1893*–1945 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 85.

In addition, Lin Shu's translation work not only began to outstrip the classical language of the Tongcheng School with which he was affiliated, but also the narrative styles of Chinese biography and fiction. He discovered that foreign fiction was "completely equal in terms of principal and method to Ancient Chinese." This so-called "principal and method" (*yifa*) is precisely the "opening scene" (*kaichang*), "the foreshadowing of narrative threads" (*fumai*), "dovetailing" (*jiesun*), "points of culmination and summation" (*jiexue*), "turning points" (*kaihe*),[20] and other devices that he had spoken about in *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Introductory Remarks*, *Ivanhoe: Preface* and *David Copperfield: Preface*, and is also the narrative and descriptive composition technique that we are currently discussing. Although Lin Shu recognized the similarity between Chinese and foreign "principal and method," nevertheless, he admired the outstanding "principal and method" of such famous writers as Dickens even more. He points out that when China discusses a work: "In general, what are stressed in a composition's opening and closing are the power of structure and the force of spirit. When giving free rein to his pen and writing about a vast amount of things, a writer often misses some details; unable to retrieve them later, he thereby enables the reader to attack him for having left those loose ends… his spirit fails to encompass the piece in its entirety."[21] This is undoubtedly Lin Shu's personal experience of writing ancient Chinese prose over many years. He could not but be extremely admiring of the meticulous and rigorous structure of Dickens' novels. He wrote that in Dickens' works "the device of foreshadowing which is so fine that every word embodies a deeper meaning and a remote cause is planted ahead of time for every incident. While writing, he has the characters that should be in the novel appear one by one and then exit the stage at appropriate intervals. Readers might almost have forgotten about the existence of a certain character or incident after having come across it but momentarily. Yet when they encounter it once again during the leisurely course of the author's narration, they suddenly recall it. Searching backward section by section for it, they will find that there has indeed been an account of this character or a source for that episode. In short, this resembles the technique of a skilful chess player: an apparently haphazard move on his part eventually proves to be of great significance. This is what makes him a national champion!"[22] Lin Shu was extremely mindful of the integrity of the structure of any work that he was translating and he especially noted such devices as "opening scene," "foreshadowing," "dovetailing," "points of culmination and summation," or "turning points," aiming for the perfect expression and leaving nothing out, just like he termed it, a "Linked-bone Guanyin Bodhisattva, which was made by bones and joints linked together. When you lifted it up after peeling

[20]English renditions for the terms *yifa*, *kaichang*, *fumai*, *jiesun*, *jiexue* and *kaihe* have been taken from Duncan M. Campbell (trans.), *Patchwork: Seven Essays on Art and Literature by Qian Zhongshu* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), p. 164.

[21]Preface to *David Copperfield*. English translation taken from Yenna Wu (trans.) "Preface to Part One of *David Copperfield*," pp. 84–85.

[22]Taken from Yenna Wu (trans.) "*Preface to Part One of* David Copperfield—Lin Shu," p. 85.

off the decayed skin, you found the whole skeleton intact, with no single scrap falling from it."[23] The fact that Lin Shu's novels are still capable of captivating readers today is intimately related to their lucid flow of story and tight connection between characters.

In terms of language, the fiction that Lin translated was also quite revolutionary, especially how he broke through many of the classical Chinese traditions of the Tongcheng School that he revered so much. As Qian Zhongshu noted, "The literary form that Lin Shu employed for his translations was what he understood to be a relatively popular and informal form of classical Chinese that was rich in elasticity. Although it retained a certain number of elements from 'Ancient [Chinese] Prose' 古文, it was nevertheless very much freer than 'Ancient Prose.' The rules that governed its diction and syntax were not at all strict. It proved an extremely capacious form of prose. Because of this, the "exquisite phrases" 隽语 and "clever conceits" 俏巧语 found in classical Chinese such as "[the] gentleman [hiding]in the rafters" [梁上君子—i.e. a thief], "five clusters of clouds" [五朵云—i.e. one' s signature], "earthen buns" [土馒头—i.e. a grave mound] or "a lady for passing the night" [夜度娘—i.e. a prostitute], and so on, all of which were certainly not permitted in "Ancient Prose" 古文, made their appearance within his translations in all sorts of guises. Colloquial vernacular expressions such as "precious little one" (小宝贝), "Papa" (爸爸), "God forsake thee, Blimber" (天杀的伯林伯) (Chapter Fifteen of his translation of *Dombey and Son*, "God forsake thee" is to say "God forsaken") and so on appear in great profusion."[24] Nevertheless, this use of language was obviously not without its contradictions for Lin Shu, as Qian Zhongshu explained: "In the first novel he translated, *La dame aux camellias*, we can observe a Lin Shu who is experimenting, groping, and vacillating. He understood that the novel could not be translated unless the taboos and rules that governed the language of 'Ancient Prose' were relaxed (not to say discarded altogether). It was necessary for him, therefore, to draw support from the traditional literary form employed in classical Chinese fiction and occasional writings as well as from the form made use of in the newspapers and journals of his own time in order to translate the novel. Yet, whether by reason of an uneasy conscience or because of his own literary habits were too deeply ingrained, Lin Shu would lay aside the rules of 'Ancient Prose' one moment only to make a great show of them the next. It is as if the Lin Shu long accustomed to writing Ancient Prose and the Lin Shu newly come to translation were involved in a form of tug-of-war or a seesaw battle."[25]

Despite this, Lin's works of translation not only had a great influence at the time, but also had an inerasable effect on the transition of Chinese fiction from the

[23]Ibid.

[24]Chinese original: Qian Zhongshu, et al., *Lin Shu de fanyi* (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981), p. 39. Translation taken from Duncan M. Campbell (trans.), *Patchwork—Seven Essays on Art and Literature by Qian Zhongshu*, p. 171.

[25]*Ibid*., p. 42.

classical to the modern. It can be said that Lin's translations brought something new to the eyes and ears of the Chinese people, setting up a new platform for the development of Chinese fiction, with many novels at the time showing traces of the influence of Lin's translations.

In his *Research on Chinese Literature*, Zheng Zhenduo offered the following three assessments of the historical contributions of Lin Shu which should be able to stand the test of time. Zheng Zhenduo said:

> Firstly, Chinese people's knowledge of the world has to now been extremely superficial… They have consistently believed that there was nothing in common between "them" and "us," and that "China" and the "West" were separated by a deep crevasse. Then when teacher Lin industriously and uninterruptedly introduced more than 150 Euro-American novels to us, a section of the intelligentsia realized that "they" and "we" were the same kind of "people" after all, and at the same time, suddenly understood their family situation, the internal workings of their society and the nature of their citizenry. Moreover, they realize that the two terms "China" and the "West" are not two mutually exclusive terms. This is one of the enormous contributions and influences of teacher Lin.
>
> Secondly, the vast majority of intellectuals at this time still believe that China's shortcomings merely consist of a corrupt government system while China's literature they believe is the most elevated and elegant and that no work from the West can match our Sima Qian, Li Bai or Du Fu; but after Lin introduced a raft of works of Western literature into China, and said that the writing of Sir Walter Scott is in no way inferior to that of Sima Qian, then everyone realized that not only does Euro-America have literature, but that they also have authors that can stand shoulder to shoulder with our own masters. This is also one of the contributions and influences of Lin.
>
> Thirdly, China's literati have heretofore always looked on fiction with a "disparaging" eye and have consistently despised writers of fiction, and all authors of fiction have used false names, unwilling to reveal their real identities to their readers. Lin, however, completely smashed this traditional view. He translated European fiction in his capacity as a "classical scholar" and went on to say that their authors were capable of standing shoulder to shoulder with Sima Qian. This is truly an extremely brave and courageous move. Following him, some Chinese literati have revealed themselves as novelists; after him, an atmosphere of world literature translation began. The volume of translations of fiction in China over the past 20 years can almost exclusively be said to be because of the inspiration and influence of Master Lin. Zhou Zuoren in the preface to his volume of translations, *Droplets* 《点滴》, states: 'When I previously translated fiction, I was greatly influenced by Lin Qinnan [Lin Shu].' In fact, besides Zhou Zuoren and other translators of fiction, creators of fiction have also been heavily influenced by Lin. The old style of fiction has been smashed by Mr. Lin and the names of European authors such as Sir Walter Scott, Dickens, Washington Irving, Alexandre Dumas and Alexandre Dumas fils have also begun to be recognized by Chinese people. This can be said to be Master Lin's greatest contribution.[26]

This is the legacy of Lin Shu. It is also the legacy of the first confluence of Chinese and Western literature, and the first demonstrable fruit of the convergence of Chinese and Western literature in China.

[26]Zheng Zhenduo, "Lin Qinnan xiansheng," in *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu* (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1957).

1.3 Wang Guowei and the Convergence of the Ancient and Modern, of Chinese and Western Cultures

Wang Guowei already had a deep foundation in classical Chinese and Western scholarship when he began his research. This enabled him to stand at the apex of the confluence of Chinese and Western, ancient and modern, and explores all kinds of social and personal issues very early on, and especially, through comparison, to analyze how Western thought can be used to dissect Chinese history and its current situation. He very early pointed out: "Amongst contemporary scholars there is contention between New and Traditional learning, Chinese and Western learning, and useful and useless learning. I must declare that there is no distinction between New and Traditional learning, Chinese and Western learning, and useful and useless learning. Those who make such distinctions are not really scholars; they may study but they are not necessarily learned. What do we mean by 'there is no distinction between the New and the Traditional in scholarship'? They argue that from a scientific point of view, 'things must be true to themselves and logic must seek what is true'. Truth and falsehood, right and wrong 'even though the sages do it, doesn't mean that it is necessarily proper' because we cannot 'respect everything ancient'. From an historical point of view, the effect of any cause of an object 'existing in the past will also be manifest in the future', therefore we should not 'despise everything that is ancient'. What do we mean by 'there is no distinction between China and the West in scholarship'? It is because though we all have a certain intelligence and capability; none of us knows the answer to the questions of life and the universe. No matter whether someone is native or from abroad, whoever can address [at least] part of the question, and satisfy my longing for knowledge and comfort my agony of doubt, is equal." To which he added, "Worldly learning is no more than science, history and literature. China and the West operate within a similar discipline. The difference between the Chinese and Western disciplines is their respective nuanced scopes and the branches within each discipline. What we need to be concerned about today is 'not having any learning' rather than 'which learning should be given more prominence.'"

As for the relationship between the ancient and modern, China and the West, Wang Guowei on the one hand believed: "Chinese learning and Western learning are bound together. One's prosperity benefits the other. Also, one's decline harms the other. Once the trend (of exchanging what one has for what one has not) has begun, they gain from each other. Moreover, as we are living in today's world and teaching today's knowledge, Chinese learning cannot flourish if Western learning does not prosper, and vice versa," going as far as to argue that the anxieties of the time would be most effectively addressed by importing Western learning. In his *Vagaries of Philosophy* published in 1903 in *Education World* magazine he argues: "Those who will raise Chinese philosophy to greater heights in the future will be those who are well versed in Western philosophy." In a 1903 university humanities subject plan that he drafted, apart from such courses as "Chinese Literature," "Foreign Literature," "The History of Chinese Philosophy," "The History of

Western Philosophy," "Sociology and Anthropology," he also included courses on "Comparative Linguistics" and "Comparative Mythology."

On the foundation of the confluence of China and the West, Wang Guowei forged a completely new path for Chinese literary criticism, proposing a completely different model of literary criticism to that which had prevailed previously. His "Commentary on *A Dream of Red Mansions*" (1904), "The Spirit of Qu Yuan's Literary Works" (1906) and "Remarks on Lyrics in the World of Men" (1910) delineated the main outlines of his new vision for literary criticism.

After reading and researching several bodies of Western philosophy and literature, Wang Guowei believed that the weakness of Chinese literature resided in its excessive emphasis on such calls to use literature as a tool for political education and social reform as "subtle words with profound meanings," "allegory and satire" or "stimulating the mind, observing prosperity and decline in the world, or teaching the art of sociability and giving advice to rulers" as well as in the failure to recognize the ability of literature to transcend the extant power structures and exist as a type of drama in its own right. But in Wang Guowei's eyes, although literature is born of drama, it is not confined to drama but rather has a most solemn purpose, and that is as a harbinger of the soul, responding to the most basic questions of existence: "Where did we come from and where are we headed?" This is precisely the "Primal Question" asked by the contemporary scholar Daniel Bell. Daniel Bell believes that this type of question has perplexed all people of every era everywhere. The reason why these questions are raised is because of the finite nature of the human condition and the tension created by man's constant striving to realize seemingly unreachable ideals.[27] Wang Guowei believed that this was also the fundamental question posed by China's traditional culture. He wrote: "Laozi says: 'The reason why I have great trouble is that I have a body' and Zhuangzi says: 'Earth has burdened me with a body and has me toiling through life.' Hardship and life have been relative for a long time." Wang Guowei employed his usual style and began with a long-standing Chinese question to discuss "the grand purpose of life." He argued that the basic meaning of literature is to answer questions like this. In his view, the reason why *A Dream of Red Mansions* is China's "greatest work" in a millennium is because *A Dream* resonates with these questions that linger in the mind. It also engenders a deep spiritual interrogation of these questions and a quest for liberation, but invariably there is no escape and tragedy is the result. Wang Guowei believed that only works that depict this scenario can truly be called literature. The reason why Wang Guowei was able to scale such heights was because he was able to put the ancient and modern, China and the West into the same crucible and hence gain insight and choose according to his own personal understanding and requirements. As he himself remarked: "Everyone is endowed with intelligence but there are things to do with the universe and life in general that nobody is able to explain … And if there is indeed some who are able to explain

[27]Daniel Bell, *Zibenzhuyi wenhua maodun* [The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism] [1976] (Beijing: Sanlianshudian, 1989), p. 218.

these questions, no matter whether they are our compatriots or whether they come from abroad, then, so long as they satisfy my thirst for knowledge and assuage the pain of my doubt, they are the same." Such acute foresight and broad vision allowed him to conflate the ancient and modern, Chinese and Western, and thus forge a completely new vision which was different from both the Chinese and Western traditions and which in the developing fabric of ancient and modern, Chinese and Western culture, contributed to and helped realize a profound transformation in Chinese culture.

1.4 Lu Xun's Advocacy of "Only Through a Thorough Comparison [with the Other] Can We Achieve a Better Awareness of the Self" and "Drawing on the Present and Revitalizing the Past [in Order to] Establish a New School of Thought"

Lu Xun (1881–1936) lived in a slightly later era than that of Lin Shu and Wang Guowei. During the period when he was extensively socially engaged, Chinese society's contradictions were rapidly becoming more complex and sharper, and all manner of Western ideas were flooding into China, the extent of which was huge and disorderly and the influence of which was both profound and complex. It was also a phenomenon rarely witnessed in the history of world culture. Under these circumstances, it was already impossible for Lu Xun, unlike Wang Guowei, to divorce himself from reality and abandon himself to the soulful pursuit of pure reflection and pure literature. He must inevitably first consider the future of his nation and his people. As Lenin pointed out: "The Chinese Narodnik combines this ideology of militant democracy, firstly, with socialist dreams, with hopes of China avoiding the capitalist path, of preventing capitalism."[28] He could also not avoid considering more frequently the fact that Western philosophy and aesthetics had some negative aspects which was not appropriate to the Chinese circumstances at the time and he therefore laid greater stress on critique and choice. It was on this basis that he promoted such slogans as "If our comparison is comprehensive then this will prompt a (cultural) awakening" and "Drawing on the present and revitalizing the past [in order to] establish a new school of thought."[29]

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[28]V. I. Lenin, "Democracy and Narodism in China," *Lenin Collected Works*., (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), Vol. 18, pp. 163–169. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1912/jul/15.htm.

[29]Lu Xun: "Qujin fugu, bieli xinzong" from "Wenhua pianzhi lun" [Concerning Imbalanced Cultural Development], *Lu Xun quanji*, vol. 1. Paraphrasing Jon Eugene von Kowallis' translation: "This drawing on the present and revitalizing the past should serve to establish a new school of thought" in *Warriors of the Spirit: Lu Xun's Early Wenyan Essays* (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies, China Research Monograph Series, forthcoming).

Lu Xun first sought the road to cultural development from the act of "examining oneself in order to know others." Having compared a number of different cultures, Lu Xun's comment on the reigning doctrine of the time was: "if wealth is to be taken as the criterion for determining civilization, then what of the descendants of the Jews who have amassed so much wealth that none of the great merchants of Europe can compare with them—what has been the lot of their people? Are railroads and mines the mark of civilization? In the last fifty years Africa and Australia have certainly witnessed an expansion in these industries, yet how have the indigenous cultures of these two continents fared? Is majority rule tantamount to civilization? Did not Spain and Portugal establish constitutions long ago? And what of the state of these nations at present? If you say material is the sole basis of culture, then will a display of advanced war machines and vast stores of grain suffice to give a nation sway over the rest of the world? If the inclinations of the majority are to be taken as the sole criterion for judging what one ought to and ought not to do, then if a man were to find himself living near a group of apes, would he be obliged to swing from trees and eat bananas?"[30] What then was the most needed "culture" of the time? Lu Xun believed that all of the above slogans were merely "grasp[ing] at the superficial aspects of Western culture and cling[ing] to its external trappings,"[31] a "whole series of institutions typical of those developed in a state of constant flux"—"things already considered outmoded in other parts of the world,"[32] and if "China were to uphold and implement [these things]" [then it would be like] "burning incense and kowtowing in homage [before these things],"[33] and that was extremely dangerous.

By comparing the Jews, the aboriginals of Africa and Australia, Spain, Portugal, and other countries, Lu Xun held that the "superficial and imbalanced"[34] elements in nineteenth century Western culture were "Material[ism] and majority [rule]."[35] The former referred to [the fact that] "in their rush to adopt the 'objective' standards of the material world, people were ready to discard the subjective inner spiritual realm with no further thought whatsoever,"[36] the result of which was: "spiritual values were corroded with each passing day and the popular mood verged on new depths of mediocrity and philistinism. In their rush to adopt the 'objective' standards of the material world, people were ready to discard the subjective inner spiritual realm with no further thought whatsoever. This emphasizing on the exterior while abandoning the inner, grasping at material while discarding its spirit, the teeming masses' desire for material things that obscures all else, bled society

[30]Ibid.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Ibid.
[33]Ibid.
[34]Ibid.
[35]Ibid.
[36]Ibid.

white [and] halted progress."[37] The latter, meanwhile, was "those who conform are deemed in the right and those who stand alone, in the wrong,"[38] disregarding the creativity and individuality/personality of the individual, "[t]he tyranny of the majority over any sector of the populace who maintain independent views,"[39] such that "in ancient times, he who ruled over the common people was one lone autocrat, but with the present trend, we may soon witness the sudden transferal of such power into the hands of ten-million shameless rascals who will make life intolerable for the ordinary citizen. And ultimately, what will that contribute to revitalizing the nation?"[40] In Lu Xun's opinion, it was not a conscious choice that led Western civilization to develop to this stage, but rather "it had no alternative." China today was able to make its own choices according to its own requirements, he argued: "it is material[ism] and majority [rule], and that theirs is an imbalanced path for development. Certain phenomena manifested themselves in the West as a result of historical conditions and were inevitable there, but to arbitrarily take these things and implement them in China is wrong."[41]

And what was it that China could choose from Western culture? In order to respond to this question, Lu Xun in his "Concerning Imbalanced Cultural Development"[42] traced back through several hundreds of years of history of Western civilization and especially the history of its ideology during the second half of the 19th century. From M. Stirner's "articulation of the doctrine of extreme individualism to the world" and S. Kierkegaard's argument that "the development of individual character should be recognized as the highest ethical priority" to A. Schopenhauer's "the power of the will is the basic substance of the universe" and H. Ibsen's "devote [one's life] to changing the status quo, with a firm resolve to do battle that remains undaunted even in the face of massive opposition." Naturally the most important was Friedrich Nietzsche placing his hope on "the Superman, the might of whose will to mastery gave him near-divine powers"![43] After undertaking a wealth of comparisons and applying them to China's circumstances, Lu Xun made the positive proposal of "We should repudiate material[istic trends] and stress the development of the native intelligence of the human mind, relying on the [potential of the] individual and dismissing [the relevance of] sheer numbers."[44] He argued that: "These men would of necessity possess unwavering faith in their own principles and never be swayed by the praise or the condemnation of society. If the world lauds them, they must not be taken in by its flattery; if it reviles them, they should not feel disheartened; if people wish to follow them they should be allowed

[37]Ibid.
[38]Ibid.
[39]Ibid.
[40]Ibid.
[41]Ibid.
[42]Ibid.
[43]Ibid.
[44]Ibid.

to do so, but if instead they hurl laughter and mockery at them in order to isolate them from others, they must not fear that either. The possibility of bringing light into our gloom and darkness, and striking the spark that can illuminate the inner-souls of our compatriots all hangs on this. When each person realizes his or her own identity and no longer merely drifts with the tide, this will enable China to stand on her own feet."[45] From this we can see that Lu Xun compared the philosophical positions of different thinkers and reached his own conclusion, the most basic aim of which was to awaken the self-awareness of the masses of people, arouse their latent creativity, and thus enable China to take its rightful place in the forest of world cultures. This was obviously at odds with the positions of the above-mentioned Western thinkers. Lu Xun only had one aim in his quest to "examine oneself in order to know others" and to "Draw on the present and revitalize the past"[46] and that was to engender clear self-awareness and establish a new indigenous system of thought.

Since Lu Xun was unlike Wang Guowei, who was more focused on spiritual inquiry, and instead concentrated on exploring the more immediate question of awakening the people, he also differed from Wang Guowei in his attitude to literature. In 1907 in his "On the power of Mara poetry"[47] and "Concerning Imbalanced Cultural Development,"[48] Lu Xun compared and analyzed the unique characteristics of the development of a range of ethnic literatures. He first noted that Indian, Hebrew, Iranian and Egyptian, among others, were all ancient civilizations which were "famous at the brink of history [and] fashioned the dawn of culture"[49] and whose strength had waned and whose culture had atrophied [to such an extent that] "grand voices gradually ceased to issue from the minds of the nation"[50] and political decline had brought with it literary stagnation. Lu Xun went on to compare these ancient cultures with Russia. Russia was also a great nation and had also sunk into silence: "Russian silence; then stirring sound. Russia was like a child, and not a mute; an underground stream, not an old well."[51] For this reason figures such as Gogol "inspired his countrymen with imperceptible tear-stained grief."[52] By comparing a range of cultures, Lu Xun demonstrated the great significance literature, and especially poetry, posed for the national culture and spirit. This kind of

[45]Lu Xun, "Po e'sheng lun," *Lun Xun quanji*, vol. 8, p. 25. English translation by Jon Eugene von Kowallis in "Lu Xun: Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices," *Boundary 2*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer 2011), pp. 45–46.

[46]Lu Xun, "Wenhua pianzhi lun."

[47]Lu Xun, "Moluo shili shuo," in *Lu Xun quanji*, vol. 1.

[48]Lu Xun, "Wenhua pianzhi lun.".

[49]Shu–ying Tsau and Donald Holoch (trans.), Lu Xun, "On the Power of Mara Poetry" in Kirk A. Denton (ed.), *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on literature 1893–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 97.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid. p. 98.

[52]Ibid.

supracultural analysis of the relationship between literature and culture was in the history of the development of Chinese literature a completely new way of thinking.

Lu Xun's main thrust in "On the power of Mara poetry" was to "[bring attention to] those, among all the poets, who were committed to resistance, whose purpose was action but who were little loved by their age."[53] Lu Xun called these kinds of poets Mara poets. "Moluo" [摩罗], generally rendered "魔罗," is the phonetic transcription of the Sanskrit word Mara meaning devil. Southey, one of the British Lake Poets in the foreword to his epic poem "The phantom of judgment" hinted at the fact that Byron was "Chief of the Satanic school"[54] and called on the government to ban the sale of Byron's works. Furthermore, in an essay responding to Byron, he publicly accused Byron of being the leader of the "Satanic school," later including many others, one of whom was Shelly, in this group. Lu Xun's "On the power of Mara poetry" was written in an effort to "introduce [the Mara poets'] words, deeds, ideas, and the impact of their circles."[55]

Byron was the focal point of "On the power of Mara poetry," offering an exhaustive introduction to his life and works. Lu Xun laid special emphasis on his passion for freedom, his opposition to violence and his fight for "independence, liberty, and human dignity,"[56] "bent upon the expurgation of all falsehood, hypocrisy, and vulgar convention."[57] At the same time, he stressed Byron's well-defined likes and dislikes, his sympathy for the weak, and his [capacity as] "a champion of strength who gave his enemies no quarter, [while] he yet displayed sympathy toward them during the deprivations of captivity."[58] He also characterized the main feature of Byron's work as full of passion, and exhibiting a lively spirit: "I have written from the fullness of my mind, from passion, from impulse, from many motives … it becomes apparent how Byron's every word, every turn of phrase, as manifestations of his life's breath and spirit."[59] Lu Xun argued that Shelly, as a member of the "Satanic School,"[60] was also "a man of great imaginative faculties who gave unrelenting pursuit to his every ideal, never shirking or turning from his goals… an extraordinarily moral character, with ideals lofty as the clouds; surging, irrepressible passions."[61] Lu Xun highlighted Shelly's dissimilarity to Byron in that he from childhood had "loved" the artistic nature of "mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests… harmonized the rhythm of his heartstrings with the sounds of Nature, enabling him to create a body of inimitable

[53]Ibid., p. 99.

[54]See Roden Noel, *Life of Lord Byron* (London: Walter Scott Co., 1890), p. 165.

[55]Lu Xun, "On the Power of Mara Poetry," p. 99.

[56]Lu Xun, "On the Power of Mara Poetry." English translation from Jon Kowallis, *Warriors of the Spirit: Lu Xun's Early Wenyan Essays*.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Satanic School is the name applied by Robert Southey to Byron and others.

[61]Lu Xun, "On the Power of Mara Poetry."

lyric compositions,"[62] and his pursuit of the mystery of life and death. It should be especially noted that even though he admired Byron and Shelly greatly, Lu Xun, in his reception of them, was also sharply critical. In fact, none of the melancholic and tender sides of romanticism like Byron's suspicion and pessimism and Shelly's metaphysical ideology and his "sympathetic yet impotent" philosophy ever appeared at the core of Lu Xun's vision. Lu Xun rarely discussed the great romantic poet Keats who was closely associated with Shelly because his poetry lacked a "Maran" flavor.

When Lu Xun mentioned any other poets who focused on the topic of rebellion, he invariably stressed their individual differences. For example when he discussed Pushkin, Lu Xun argued that "while exhibiting Byronic features, nevertheless [his works] diverge quite markedly [from that style]."[63] This "uniqueness" demonstrated itself first and foremost in "the transferal of Pushkin's affections away from the Byronic hero to the ordinary people of his ancestral land."[64] According to Lu Xun's analysis, the reason for this was because of the different character of the Russian state and its people and the different dispositions between Pushkin and Byron.[65] Lu Xun went on to analyze Pushkin and Lermontov: "Pushkin and Lermontov were to Byron as water drawn from one and the same stream, and yet they greatly differed. Pushkin took on the outward manifestations of [Byron's] Weltschmerz and Lermontov inherited his ethic of remaining in the opposition. Thus Pushkin eventually submitted to the Tsar's authority, choosing reconciliation, whereas Lermontov fought on to the end, without retreating or wavering in the least."[66] Lu Xun went on to say: "Lermontov, too, loved his country deeply, but this differed markedly from Pushkin's brand of patriotism in that he avoided reference to Russia's military power in any description of his nation's greatness. His truest love was for the villages and the steppes—an attachment to the country folk that extended to the natives of the Caucasus as well, a region that had risen against Russia for the sake of its own freedom."[67] In addition, he also compared the contrasting attitude of both of these men to Napoleon and their different attitudes to nature, etc. Apart from these, he used the same method to introduce the three Polish poets Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Slowacki and Zygmunt Krasiński and Hungary's Sándor Petőfi, among others. Grouping works that shared a common subject or spirit and performing comparative analysis can be said to be one of the methods used in comparative literature's subject analysis.

In analyzing the "Satanic poets" led by Byron and Shelly, Lu Xun paid especial attention to how their works were distributed as well as their influence. He noted that Byron and Shelly "took up the fight. With the power of a tidal wave, they

[62]Ibid.
[63]Ibid.
[64]Ibid.
[65]Ibid., p. 88.
[66]Ibid.
[67]Ibid., p. 91.

smashed into the pillars of the ancien régime. The swell radiated to Russia, giving rise to Pushkin, poet of the nation; to Poland, creating Mickiewicz, poet of revenge; to Hungary, waking Petőfi, poet of patriotism; their followers are too many to name."[68] He pointed out that Pushkin was deeply influenced by Byron. When Pushkin was exiled to the south of the country, "he began to read Byron's poetry and was deeply affected by its greatness, something that accounts for transformations both in his own thought and writing style. His short lyric poems, too, took after Byron, and The Prisoner of the Caucasus, one of his most extraordinary works, is of the Childe Harold genre."[69] Moreover, "it was through Pushkin that the Byronic mantle of Mara thought passed on to Lermontov."[70] "By the time he [Lermontov] had risen to the rank of major in the Elite Guard of the Imperial Hussars, he began to imitate the style of Byron's oriental tales and developed a great admiration for the character of the poet,"[71] and at the same time "Lermontov's character was also akin to that of Shelley. Shelley's Prometheus Unbound had a strong effect on him, and he grappled with the same set of questions about life and the struggle between good and evil [that had tormented Shelley], but in verse he never imitated him."[72] Lu Xun noted both their similarities and differences. Additionally, he analyzed the influence of Byron and Pushkin on Adam Mickiewicz, the unique features "must surely have been found among Byron's Oriental poems"[73] displayed in Juliusz Slowacki's works, and Sándor Petőfi "had studied the poetry of Byron and Shelley; his verse speaks boldly of freedom and his fervor and abandon have much in common with the temperament of the two poets."[74] Naturally, covering a multitude of cultures, discussing the spread and influence of the "Satanic school" led by Byron and Shelly from England and Russia to Poland and Hungary all in one breath, analyzing its sources and spread, strictly speaking Lu Xun's research cannot be termed empirical. But at least he used the methodology of influence research to reach previously unachieved results.

In sum, Lu Xun firmly believed that "to praise the true greatness of your native land takes introspection and knowing others—awareness comes from careful comparison. Once awareness finds its voice, each sound strikes the soul, clear, articulate, unlike ordinary sounds."[75] This statement is not only testimony to the young Lu Xun's ideals and aims, but it also shows that the main technique adopted by Lu Xun was comparison. The fact that the domain he concentrated on mostly was literature cannot but be attributed to the fact that during his research, he immersed himself in a range of comparative literatures. No matter whether it was

[68]Ibid., p. 99.
[69]Ibid., p. 87.
[70]Ibid.
[71]Ibid.
[72]Ibid., p. 89.
[73]Lu Xun, "On the Power of Mara Poetry", Sect. 8.
[74]Ibid., p. 98.
[75]Ibid., p. 99.

cross-disciplinary cultural and literary research or cross-cultural comparative research, or research into reception and influence, his contribution was always unique and it can be said that it was the flood that opened up China's comparative literature. The facts above clearly demonstrate that China's comparative literature was not innately pre-existing, nor was it shipped in from abroad, but rather it was a response to the demands of the development of Chinese literature itself.

1.5 The *Critical Review* Group's "Promote the National Essence so as to Integrate New Knowledge into the Chinese Context"

Representing another tide of the May Fourth new culture movement was the *Critical Review* [Xue heng] magazine which from its outset raised the banner of "Promote the national essence so as to integrate new knowledge into the Chinese context."[76] This slogan was conspicuously displayed on the cover of the journal to its very end. And this was no coincidence.

The *Critical Review* was officially inaugurated in January 1922 and published monthly until the 60th issue, which appeared at the end of 1926. The publication ceased in January 1927, only to reappear in January 1928 as a bi-monthly. By the end of 1929, the 72nd issue was published, after which it once again ceased publication in 1930 for a year, reappearing in January 1931, resuming publication once again until it ceased in 1933. The journal was consistently edited throughout these 11 years by Wu Mi and published by the Zhonghua Shuju. The publication also united a significant number of regular scholarly authors and readers. Over the life of the magazine, the number of contributors to *Critical Review* numbered over one hundred, but only Wu Mi (1894–1978), Mei Guangdi (1890–1945), Hu Xiansu (1894–?), Tang Yongtong (1893–1964), and Liu Yizhi (1880–1956) were truly influential and can be seen as the soul and nucleus of the magazine. In 1917 Wu Mi left Tsinghua College to study in America and in 1921 completed a Masters Degree at Harvard. On his return, at the invitation of Mei Guangdi, he took up a teaching position at the Southeastern University in Nanjing. At the age of 21, Mei Guangdi traveled to America on a Boxer Indemnity Scholarship where he had earned a Master's degree at Harvard, returning to China in 1920, and in 1921 he took up the position of president of the Faculty of Western Literature at the Southeastern University. Hu Xiansu was originally a botanist who had studied at the University of California at Berkeley. After returning home, he went back to Harvard to read the Humanities. Tang Yongtong went to America in 1918 and in 1922 earned a Master's degree in Philosophy from Harvard. Returning that same year, he took up the post of Professor of Philosophy at Southeastern University. Liu Yizhi was an

[76]English translation taken from Kang–i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 473.

historian who had worked at Nanjing Academy in Jiangyin and Zhongshan Academy in Nanjing, after which he studied in Japan.

The objective of the *Critical Review* Group was to "debate and investigate learning, explain truth, promote national essence, integrate new knowledge, and honestly perform the task of criticism without prejudice or partisanship, no bias and no prior allegiances, dispassionately and independently."

On the aspect of "promoting the national essence" their reasons were three-fold: First, the new and the old must be spoken of in relative terms. There is no absolute boundary between the two: without the old, there can be no new. Second, the Humanities are different from the natural sciences in that you are not able to take evolution as the absolute basis. The "new" is not always better than the "old" and the present does not always triumph over the past. Third: there is "change" and "continuity." "Continuity" is made up of the truth which mankind has accrued after experiencing innumerable tests. This kind of truth is not only immutable; it also carries a broad global meaning. For example, in 1917 when Mei Guangdi was studying at Harvard, he had debated this topic with Hu Shih. Hu Shih began with evolution and argued that human history has been a process of rejecting the old and replacing it with the new, whereas Mei Guangdi held that history should be a record of man's quest for enduring value. He argued: "What we need today is an international perspective which is not only compatible with the spirit of any age, but one that is compatible with ALL eras. We must claim ownership of all truthful, good and beautiful objects that have stood the test of time, and only then will we be capable of embracing life both now and into the future. In this way, history will become a force for life and only thus can we hope to achieve a level of affirmation with which we can measure the value of humankind and distinguish between the real and the bogus, between the fundamental and the transitory." Wu Mi also stressed that "Only if we identify those elements of Chinese traditional cultures that are universally effective and enduring will we are able to rebuild our people's self-respect." So it is obvious that there were marked differences between the *Critical Review* and the "National Essence Group." The National Essence Group stressed the principle of "Preserving the national essence" with the emphasis on preserving. What the *Critical Review* emphasized was "development" and "seeking the truth," and their methodology was not to doggedly preserve the old, but to critique and integrate new knowledge in order to break through national boundaries and seek understanding and embrace all that is truly good and beautiful in the world, something that the National Essence Group were incapable of striving for.

"Integrating new knowledge" chiefly meant ingesting the West's new ideology, methodology and knowledge. The Critical Review School's passion for "introducing Western learning" was in no way inferior to that of the Radical Group. They strongly emphasized the importance of ingesting Western culture, as Mei Guangdi put it, "I live in this age and interact with Western culture. All that my forebears had failed to experience are jostling magnificently before me. I am the fortunate beneficiary of the sage wisdom that others have so painstakingly promoted but that only after thousands of years of searching has now begun to be discovered. The opportunity afforded us today is truly rare." However, there were two glaring

differences between the Critical Review School's attitude to the assimilation and ingestion of Western learning and other contemporaries who advocated Westernization: First, they especially stressed that Western theories must be systematically and comprehensively researched and then cautiously adopted. The majority of the followers of the *Critical Review* believed that if Western learning was to be introduced then its foundations and evolution must be clearly understood. Wu Mi stressed time and again that Greco–Roman classical culture and Christianity were the two major wellsprings of Western civilization and that they cannot be overlooked in studying Western civilization. The *Critical Review* magazine not only vigorously advocated the study of Greek and Latin, but it also allocated a great deal of translation print space to introduce classic works, including the Five Dialogues of Plato and Aristotle's Ethics, translations of which were serialized in the *Critical Review*. Secondly, they strongly insisted that the introduction of Western learning must be compatible with China's cultural traditions and that it must be applicable to the needs of China: "Either it must be something that China has always lacked and able to offer something to make amends for a shortcoming or that it is able to rescue China from its malaise and be of reformative and progressive assistance." If this aim was to be achieved, then one should not "be timid" but "embrace whatever is new with gusto." They despised the so-called "conformity with world trends," holding that "real heroes" were in fact "all happy to go against the tide." They argued that objects that truly belonged to the realm of the genuine, good and beautiful, inevitably "rise above the boundary between East and West, and possess a common, eternal nature." Thus Western culture must be treated in the same way as Eastern culture in that those parts which "are rooted in a specific Western history, national character, social custom or practice and are taken as the determinant of the questions of a given time and place" must be dismissed and that universal, eternal and "real" Western culture should be sought. They went on to argue that this Western culture would not only run counter to Chinese traditional culture, but it would also promote the illustrious development of the latter.

The Critical Review School pointed out three unhealthy tendencies in cultural research in its attitude to the ills of the day, the first of which was "those who despise and slander Chinese national culture." They "see everything in Chinese culture as an object for attack and that everything in that culture must be rejected and erased." They went on to say that "they not only destroy traditional scholarship, but also arbitrarily repudiate the ancients, regarding animosity towards the dead as a stepping stone for themselves and scholarship as a vehicle for venting personal feelings." The second type was the "Westernizers." The weakness of this latter group was that they had not completed a comprehensive and systematic study of Western culture. They were often biased or took one aspect to represent the whole. The third type was those that "promoted the old conservative culture." They often drew random analogies and used foreigners' words as a talisman [to evaluate Chinese culture]. Some of them "believed that Euro-American literature would soon meet its demise, that science would become bankrupt, and that this would be a 'real shame.'" Some even went as far as to say that "several dozen famous Westerners have praised Asian culture or have formed groups to study it, and they

do not question whether the views they espouse are rooted in the spirit of the East or what the purpose of the researcher is. They simply announce to each other that Euro-American culture will soon decline and that Asian culture will replace it." Tang Yongtong pointed out that the common shortcomings of these three types of people were "shallowness" and "narrowness." By "shallow," he meant that their "discussion did not explore the roots." They only observed surface phenomena and did not analyze their source. By "narrow" he meant that their knowledge was restricted and that they took the part to represent the whole. Because of this "shallowness" and "narrowness," "reality could be turned on its head" and "truth could be buried." Thus internally "the ancient learning was discarded" and externally they were only capable of "adopting one facet and missing the totality." The result was that "for the speakers, they would simply choose one of their propositions and run with it, while for the audience, they would rely on a single statement and inevitably slavishly conform," to the extent that the study of culture could not but inhabit the vulgar. Tang Yongtong stressed that: "Cultural research is actually a discussion of truth" and that it must "seek comprehensively and exhaustively" Chinese and foreign cultural materials, "diligently examine the facts and dispassionately mount your argument," and only then can the aim of seeking truth be achieved.

The beginning of the 20th century saw a vigorous rise in the interweaving of China's new culture movement with the international cultural schools of thought, forming an integral part of the 20th century international cultural dialog. Naturally, the other three major streams of thought, namely conservatism, liberalism and radicalism also surged forward. The radical school represented by Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu venerated Marx, while the liberal school represented by Hu Shih and others discovered Dewey and Russell, and the modern conservatives represented by the *Critical Review* magazine followed the new humanist thinker Irving Babbitt. The questions that they pondered and sought to resolve were largely similar (how to deal with tradition, how to approach the West, how to establish a new culture, etc.), and they all exhibited the characteristics of China's new cultural renaissance. These characteristics were largely expressed by: First, a fierce patriotic passion, and an overwhelming motivation to awaken the populace and save the nation. The radicals' rejection of tradition and the conservatives' dogged defense of tradition both stem in the first instance from this consideration; Second, China's cultural renaissance differed from the Western renaissance in that the latter firstly affirmed the value of the individual and emphasized the importance of a fully formed individual in order to achieve a fully developed society; the former, in contrast, first called for social reform and a just society before the individual could be promoted. The radical school stressed revolution, Lu Xun et al. stressed the reform of the national character and the conservatives stressed the restoration of the "national soul." None saw the individual as primary. Third, to a large extent, China's cultural renaissance was born under the pressure of international imperialism. In relative terms, it was not a product of internal gestation and as such, lacked any inherent ideological antecedents. During the May Fourth period, neither the radicals, the liberals nor the conservatives produced an outstanding figure that could represent their own people

and form an independent system that was capable of standing unflinching beside the world's great renaissance masters. Fourth, China's renaissance movement occurred during a period of Western decline brought on by the First World War. The contradictions and weaknesses of Western civilization had already been partly exposed, yet China's radicals, liberals and conservatives were all seeking truth from the West and they all had to circumnavigate these contradictions and weaknesses. The radicals opposed capitalism, the liberals advocated "government of the worthy" and sorting out the national heritage, while the conservatives called for "the promotion of the national essence, and the integration of new knowledge," all of which resonated with this new direction.

In sum, during the May Fourth new culture movement, the conservatives and liberals both reflected on the same problems and shared many similarities. In fact, the three schools together constituted the early 20th century Chinese cultural renaissance. In the past we have failed to research modern Chinese conservatism as represented by the *Critical Review* magazine adequately and because of certain clashes with the radicals and liberals, we have excluded them from the cultural renaissance movement, to the extent that we have seen them as opponents and expunged them. This goes against historical reality.

The fact is that most of the core *Critical Review* figures were high-born and had studied abroad. They were relatively well versed in Western culture and most took up posts at university on their return to China. They were also mostly born after 1890. From the point of view of their family background and age as well as their educational experience and social standing, these intellectuals who formed the nucleus of *Critical Review* were not too different from such leaders of the May Fourth new culture movement as Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu, Hu Shih and Lu Xun. They pondered questions from an identical vantage point but their orientations were all different.

In opposing the theory of evolution and insisting that "the only thing that is new is a duck," the Critical Review School stood opposed to the radicals and liberals on the question of adopting China's traditions. At the same time, in stressing change and development, they transcended the old conservatism whilst on the question of introducing Western learning, they were alone in raising the standard for comprehensive analysis and selecting what the nation required and discarding the long muddled "Chinese learning for essence, Western learning for application" framework. It was not a coincidence that the Critical Review School chose this modern conservative route. In the first instance, this was related to the terrain of world culture at the time. The First World War had created a pervasive sense of dejection and decline in Western society which gave rise to a broad interest in non-European culture. People began to feel that China's traditional culture held significant new meaning for the world. On the other hand, the *Critical Review* magazine appeared almost three years after the crest of the May Fourth new culture movement. Through a process of examination and reflection, people began to realize that cultural progress is inevitably gradual, as Wu Mi put it: "All institutional artifacts, all theories and scholarship, without exception are continually changed and undergo

renewal. Nothing endures without cause."[77] This requires new contributions to replace outdated artifacts which should be discarded and this process relied on the coexistence of the new and the old for a relatively long period of time in order to offer comparison, experimentation and selection. Abruptly announcing a ban on a certain type of culture would inevitably cause what Mei Guangdi described as "the replacement of one tyranny with another," and would not necessarily achieve the aim of establishing a new culture. For this reason, the Critical Review School did not accept the liberal school's policy of "rejecting the old and creating the new," and disagreed even more vehemently with the radical school's "smashing the old and establishing the new" but endorsed the calls of the new humanists to "retain the old and establish the new," "cast aside the old and allow the new to spring forth" or "methodically change things and create the new." In addition, all the Critical Review School devotees differed from the political conservatives in that they were genuine cultural conservatives. They would never defend the current social conditions, nor did they seek to "uphold the old and change the system." Rather, they believed the only path for social reform was cultural renaissance. This meant that they maintained an "intellectual distance" between themselves and the volatile political movements of the day. They took on as their mission the search for absolute truth, pouring disdain on "conforming to the trend of the time," and opposing "going with the flow" and "sinking or floating with the rest." While the radical school threw themselves into revolution and the liberals trumpeted "government of the worthy," the gentlemen of the Critical Review School remained committed to cultural education and it was their emphasis on humanistic education and their persistence that drove them into the arms of the international new humanist movement.

[77]Wu Mi, "Lun xinwenhua yundong," in *Guogu xinzhi lun*, p. 80.

Chapter 2
The Establishment of the Discipline and Its Champions: Chen Yinke—Qian Zhongshu—Zhu Guangqian—Zong Baihua

Amidst the frequent contact between Chinese and foreign literature in the first 20 years of the twentieth century, the conditions for the emergence of comparative literature as a field of study were maturing day by day. At the time, Tsinghua University's literature courses included such topics as "Comparative Literature," "French Literature," "Modern Literature," "The Western Background to Modern Chinese Literature," "Modern German Drama," "Literature and Life," and "The Tale of Genji." There was research on Latin writers, Chaucer, Shakespeare, John Milton, Dante, Goethe, and the modern writers Heiberg, Woolf and Joyce among others. The language courses included "Advanced English Philology," "English Instruction Methodology," and "The Art of Translation."[1] From 1929 to 1931, one of the leaders of the New Critic School, the President of the English Literature Department of the University of Cambridge, I.A. Richards., took up a post at Tsinghua where he established the two disciplines, "Comparative Literature" and "Literary Criticism." Later, P.D. Jameson, a lecturer at Tsinghua, wrote *Comparative Literature* based on Richards' ideas and lecture notes which undertook a comparative study of English, French, and German literature. This served as an excellent induction and impetus to the development of China's comparative literature.

While the comparative literature courses in the universities at the time were heavily influenced by the practice of comparative literature in the West, nevertheless it also inherited some of the hallmarks of traditional Chinese scholarship. For example, Chen Yinke's "A Comparative Study of the Buddhist Classics in Various Languages: A Comparison between the Chinese Translations and that of Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Uighur and Central Asian Languages," followed by the establishment of a range of comparative literature courses such as "A Study of Indian Narratives in Chinese Literature," "A Bibliography of Western Works on Oriental Studies," and "Selected Readings in Dunhuang Fiction," "Yuan Zhen and Bai Juyi" and "Translations of Buddhist Literature." The range of topics covered

[1]See *Qinghua daxue xiaoshi* (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press), p. 167.

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D. Yue, *China and the West at the Crossroads*, China Academic Library,
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by the research students under his direction included "A Comparative Study of Ancient Steles and Their Relationship with Foreign Tribes" and more. In 1936 Chen Quan published his *A Study of Chinese and German Culture* in which he commented on the penetration and influence of Chinese fiction, drama, and lyric poetry in Germany. In 1941, at the Southwest United University, Wen Yiduo wrote a work entitled *Historical Trends in Literature* in which he highlighted the earliest Hebrew poetry in China's "Songs of Zhou" and the "Da Ya" and India's "Rig Veda" and the "Old Testament" and that they appeared around the same time as the Greek "Iliad" and "Odyssey." Later the ripples of both cultures expanded, interacted, and became interwoven such that this new exotic genre, of necessity, began to make itself felt. He held that "Relations between cultures should not fear to 'give,' nor should they be afraid to 'take.' This alone is the direction of history."[2] In the foreword to his *On Poetry*, Zhu Guangqian discussed how the leaders of Tsinghua and Peking universities, including Hu Shih, all argued that foreign literature professors should all take responsibility for part of the courses in their Chinese Literature faculties and *The Psychology of Art* and *On Poetry* comprised his lecture notes at the university. These theories all carried a strong Chinese flavor and in the interval between the 1930s and the 1950s, Chinese comparative literature had already established its own unique path in the Chinese tertiary education landscape.

2.1 Chen Yinke—Pioneer of the Study of Origin and Influence

Chen Yinke was high-born of a most illustrious family. In 1902, at the age of 13, he spent three years in Japan and in 1909, at the age of 20 he was admitted to Germany's Berlin University. In 1912 he returned to China from Switzerland, and in the spring of 1913 he returned to France and entered the University of Paris, returning to China in the second half of 1914. In the winter of 1918, he again set out for America and entered Harvard where he studied Sanskrit and Greek. In 1921, he returned to Germany and entered the Research School of Berlin University where he studied Sanskrit and Oriental paleography, remaining in Europe for about four years. In 1926, he took up a post in the Institute of Chinese National Culture.

Chen Yinke was fluent in the language of a dozen or more countries, was exceedingly ambitious, and had a profound academic vision. The point of departure for his scholarship was, in the first instance, the rubric "Internally, my compatriots feel uninspired by their native culture while at the same time are buffeted by the waves of international thinking." He was preoccupied with how to enable Chinese culture to free itself from its current dejected state and breathe into it new life. He

[2]Wen Yiduo, "Wenxue de lishi Dongxiang", in *Shenhua yu shi* (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1956), pp. 201–207.

said that he personally "did not dare to look at works from the Xia, Shang, Zhou or Han dynasties but I love to read the history of the national culture from the mid-antiquity period onwards." This was because "the reason why the Li clan of the Tang Dynasty rose to prominence was because they drew new blood from the wild lands beyond the Great Wall and infused the decadent culture of the Chinese central plains with it, washing away the old and initiating the new, expanding and restoring until a new reality was created." He believed that the history of the two Jins,[3] the northern and southern dynasties and the Sui-Tang was a complex period of mutual ingestion, inspiration, melding and turbulence, and that the result of these processes was the 300 years of Tang "ascendancy." The reason why he concentrated on the significance of this period of history was to "expel the contamination of the past" and remove everything old which did not accord with the requirements of the day and allow the vital foreign blood to transform the ancient carcass [of Chinese traditional culture], impart a new vigor to it and bring it back to life.

Chen Yinke established the primary foundation for research into the origin and influence of Chinese comparative literature. In the first instance, he saw the adoption of external culture and research into the influence of foreign culture as an important process in the revitalization of the native culture. The reason why he praised Feng Youlan and Wang Guowei so highly was because they were able to "Adopt concepts from abroad and cross-reference them with native materials" "such that the literary vogue was transformed for a moment and lit the way for others." He argued: "When two cultures meet there are naturally certain elements that are incompatible and need to be abandoned, but there will also be elements that are lacking in the native culture and these are implanted from the foreign culture and produce new cultural phenomena." Of the former, he took "How the Licentious Nun Lotus Became a Nun" as an example which illustrated how the Buddhist canon touched on "the significance of sexual intercourse [for Buddhist cultivation]" and how this, when translated into Chinese, was largely silenced. When "Lotus" relates how a mother and daughter were married to the same husband, and how this husband was also the son of the mother in question, this type of scenario was "anathema to China's traditional ethical standards" and [it was concluded] that "it could only be banished from sight and never be allowed to see the light of day."[4] This illustrates the difference between the two cultures and their mutual repulsion. Of the latter, he took Chinese fiction as his example, speaking often of the wooden structure of the Chinese novel and how it largely arose from the mythological tales of the Buddhist classics. "If we examine the structure of [Chinese fiction's] content, invariably it is a blend of a myriad of interactions and biographies."[5] He argued that

[3]The "two Jins" refers to the combined Jin period in Chinese history, lasting between the years 265 and 420 AD. There are two main divisions in the history of the dynasty, the first being Western Jin (西晋, 265–316) and the second Eastern Jin (东晋, 317–420).

[4]Chen Yinke, "Lianhua seni chujia yinyuan ba," in *Hanliutang ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), pp. 154–155.

[5]Chen Yinke, "Chanhui jianzui jin Guanmingjing mingbao zhuan ba," in *Jingmingguan conggao*, Vol. 2, p. 257.

Buddhist instruction regularly employed narrative, and whenever narrative is employed in a public discourse, that discourse must unavoidably be moulded by the speaker's personal experience and circumstances. So you have an original story, then it is split into two, then you have two original stories and they are both conflated into one. If one is able to trace its source and analyze its component parts, then it is possible to discern the customs of the times. This process is in fact a summary of the four stages in the process of analyzing the influence of comparative literature, namely "Inspiration—Acknowledgment—Digestion—Change."

Chen Yinke not only focused on the influence on research content, but also on its form and methodology. He studied the methodology of Buddhist textual annotation and felt that it differed greatly from traditional Chinese textual annotation. He argues that the language of indigenous Chinese sages is terse and profound and that they must employ historiographic textual research, or in other words, the method of confirming truth from facts and [thus] "the Indian method of explaining the sutras differs greatly from our own. For example, sutras that use analogy or that outline the precepts of the forefathers, although they draw widely on both the sacred and the mundane in order to illustrate the sayings of the Buddha, nevertheless content largely consists of mythological tales." This is because "Buddhism spread widely throughout China during the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the scholar officials were deeply influenced by it," and as a result "Pei Songzhi's *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Liu Xiaobiao's *Catalogue of New Books*, Li Daoyuan's *Water Sutra*, or Yang Xuanzhi's *The Monasteries of Luo Yang*, and more were produced."[6] These new methods of classical textual analysis not only established a new academic discourse but also fermented the development of Chinese fiction and had a definite influence on Chinese academic enquiry and criticism.

This beginning from fundamentals and progressing from analyzing the random influence to summing up the basic principles in the propagation of the influence of the literature undoubtedly made a theoretical contribution to research in the comparative literature. Apart from this, Chen Yinke suggested that work "must be imbued with a sense of historical development and system differentiation," that we must "examine the structure of its content," "delve into the spread of its methodology" and "discover its source and analyze its component parts in order to identify the prevailing customs of the day," all of which established a foundation for the study of the origins and influence of China's comparative literature.

Regarding the phenomenon of engagement and mutual interpretation between two cultures, Chen Yinke also offered innovative interpretations. He especially stressed that contact between two cultures was never a simple process of recognition or alignment. On the contrary, there would always be differences and there would always be intentional or unintentional misreadings or misinterpretation. And it was the tension that was generated by these differences and misreadings or misinterpretations that broke through the original mutually existing framework and

[6]Chen Yinke, "Yang Shuda Lunyu shuzheng xu," in *Jinmingguan conggao*, Vol. 1, pp. 232–233.

gave rise to change, renovation, and reconstruction on both sides. Chen Yinke pointed out that China employed two different methods in interpreting the Buddhist classics: one was "Matching concepts"[7] and the other was "Reconciling editions." The so-called "Matching concepts" or "honestly choosing concepts from foreign works in order to explain the text of sacred canons" involved using Chinese concepts to explain the Buddhist tenets. "Reconciling editions," meanwhile, involved "comparing different translated editions of sutras with one another." Chen Yinke believed that the introduction of Buddhism into China was the first meeting between the Chinese people and another people with a completely different ideology. This was extremely significant, the result of which meant that Buddhism changed China's Confucianism and Daoism whilst Chinese culture also changed the original Buddhism itself.

Chen Yinke went on to point out that the process of adopting a foreign culture and promoting renewal of the native culture is realized through a reinterpretation of one's forebears by a later generation or in fact of one's original culture itself. This reinterpretation invariably fails to accord with an author's original intent—in fact at times it does not accord with historical fact—and thus the purveyors of the "National essence" scoffed at it. However, if this interpretation is a summing up or development of one's understanding of one's forebears according to one's current consciousness, then it must be affirmed as a type of cultural renovation in its own right. He believed that Chinese culture developed through wise men over the ages adopting the fresh blood of foreign cultures, with which they came in contact from time to time and their reinterpretation and remaking of their original culture in that process. Naturally, this interpretation must be conducted on the basis of a thorough understanding of one's forebears. But one must also note that "Our ancient philosophers lived many thousands of years ago and so it is extremely difficult to get a true picture of their era. The materials we have today that we can rely on are a smallest portion of the documents of the time," "mere dregs" in fact. Hence, "all interpretations of [the real meaning of] the ancients are but modern speculation." Chen Yinke argues, "If we add to that a linked and integrated collection process and a systematic arrangement and collation, then writers either intentionally or unintentionally, according to the realities of their own era, the environment which they inhabit and the theories with which they have been indoctrinated, speculatively interpret the true intent of the ancients. For this reason, those who today discuss ancient Chinese philosophy in fact are generally discussing their own current philosophy."[8]

Chen Yinke grasped this quite perceptively. He said, "In attempting to describe reality, there is invariably one type of scholarship which adopts a historical

[7]Translator's note: Apparently Chen Yinke mistakenly understood this expression *geyi* (格义) to mean "matching concepts," whereas the original meaning was more like "categorizing concepts".

[8]Chen Yinke, "Feng Youlan Zhongguo zhexueshi shencha baogao," in *Jingmingguan conggao*, Vol. 2, p. 248.

linguistic theory and is obviously spurious, whilst to adopt a philosophical theoretical position will not necessarily lead to progress." He used Wang Fusi and Cheng Yichuan's commentary on the *Book of Changes* as an example and pointed out that their commentaries did not necessarily accord with the original meaning of the Book, "otherwise a book on philosophical theories might indeed supplant the legitimate traditional commentaries."[9] Thus it is in fact a kind of mistake to simply view culture as something immutable, or as some artifact that can be displayed in a museum. Chen Yinke believed that all of the "linked and integrated collections and systematic arrangements and collations [are written by] writers [who] either intentionally or unintentionally, according to the realities of their own era, the environment which they inhabit and the theories with which they have been indoctrinated, speculatively interpret the true intent of the ancients. For this reason, those who today discuss ancient Chinese philosophy in fact are generally discussing their own current philosophy."[10] The so-called "realities of their own era, the environment which they inhabit and the theories with which they have been indoctrinated," are in fact an author's "contemporary consciousness."

On the other hand, Chen Yinke appears not to approve of comparisons of cultural phenomena that do not have a direct relevance. He sternly criticized such unscientific general observations as "Homer can be compared to Qu Yuan and Confucius can be compared to Goethe." He describes how, in such works, "the ancient and the modern, Chinese and foreign, heaven or man, dragon or ghost, there is nothing that cannot be compared" and that they contain "forced interpretations, abnormalities by the score, more than can be dealt with."[11]

But he did not normally reject appropriately-based and creative parallel research. Especially in his extended work on *The Karma of Reincarnation* (*Zaisheng yuan*), completed in the early 1950s, he set out his full attitude to parallel research. First of all, he performed a thorough comparative analysis of *The Karma of Reincarnation* in both the Chinese literary context as well as the global literary context. While discussing the structure of *The Karma of Reincarnation*, he compared the structural differences between Chinese and Western fiction. He argued that Chinese fiction "was far less structurally refined than Western fiction." The structure of such works as *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*), *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Shitou ji*) and *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi*) "can all be readily discussed." From the same genre, "*Jade Bracelet Karma* (*Yuchai yuan*) is verbose and boring with no systematic structure. When compared to the refined structure and systemic clarity of *The Karma of Reincarnation*, they are worlds apart." *The Karma of Reincarnation* runs to over 10 million characters, and it can be said that "its narrative has a definite focus and its structure is devoid of such defects as randomly inserted sub-plots. It can be said to

[9]Chen Yinke, "Dacheng yizhang shuhou," in *Jingmingguan conggao*, Vol. 2, p. 165.

[10]Chen Yinke, "Feng Youlan Zhongguo zhexueshi shencha baogao," in *Jingmingguan conggao*, Vol. 2, p. 248.

[11]Chen Yinke, "Yu Liu Shuya lun guowen shiti shu," in *Jinmingguan conggao*, Vol. 2, p. 224.

be the acme of *tanci* ballad works." As a matter of fact, whilst comparing it to the Western literature, he made special mention of the unique characteristics of *The Karma of Reincarnation*'s phraseology: "The language of *The Karma of Reincarnation* is straight-forward, but when it comes to the narrative, the passion in its language and its seven word lines combine to make a great work." The text runs to over 10 million words and its beauty compares favorably with the famous epic historical poetry of Greece and India. He argued: "People around the world sing the praises of the Indian, Greek and Western epic poems, yet they do not know that China has her own … *The Karma of Reincarnation*, even though it is an outstanding poem in the epic 7 character line style. It can at the very least stand proudly beside the various epic historical poems from abroad." He pointed out that, compared with all the literatures in the world, Chinese literature's "greatest distinguishing feature is its ability to couple phrases and words, rhymes and tones so well." However, because it is a dualistic language, "it is often rent asunder, with its central arterial thought incapable of convergence." But the author of *The Karma of Reincarnation* "is ideologically agile and will not be bound by duality and cadence," and thus Chen Yinke argues that "without freedom of thought there can be no elegant literature," that "this is an obvious truth, and if people cannot see it then they are impossibly stupid." It was actually through comparison that Chen Yinke discovered the unique "artistic value" of T*he Karma of Reincarnation* and he wrested for this work, which had been deemed "incapable of entering the canon of great literature," an artistic masterpiece which had been completely snubbed and its extremely talented author almost totally eclipsed, a rightful place in the history of Chinese and global literature.

In sum, Chen Yinke was a giant in the period of the 1930s to 1950s when comparative literature was developing. From beginning to end, he firmly believed: "If we are really able philosophically to craft a system and be creative, then on the one hand we must absorb and import foreign theories whilst on the other never forgetting the status of our own race. These two diametrically opposite yet complimentary attitudes can be seen in the true Daoism spirit and in the old ways of the New Confucians across the two thousand years of the history of contact between the thought of our people and that of the outside world."[12] This is the type of person who does not merely adopt the work of one individual or one school of thought, but "reason which transcends both time and space" also pervades their work as a whole. As far as they are concerned, "Apart from China, there are nine more continents; apart from the present day, there is [also] the future."[13] Chen Yinke was the first individual to introduce the theories of the fusion of two cultures into the fabric of a steadily developing world culture.

[12]Chen Yinke, "Feng Youlan Zhongguo zhexueshi xiace shencha baogao," in *Jinmingguan conggao*, Vol. 2, p. 252.

[13]Chen Yinke, "Wang Jing'an xiansheng yishu xu," in *Jinmingguan conggao*, Vol. 2, p. 220.

2.2 Qian Zhongshu Probes the Differences and Similarities in Cross-Cultural Literature

After the progress of the 1920s, by the 1930s, all scholars who studied Chinese literature agreed that a thorough knowledge of both Chinese and Western literature was necessary in order to achieve innovation in literary research. As Fu Sinian put it: "If you are to research Chinese literature, yet never understand foreign literature, or if you are to document the history of Chinese literature yet have never read any of the history of foreign literature, you will never ever grasp the truth."[14] A contemporary of Chen Yinke, Qian Zhongshu established a basis for Chinese comparative literature, approaching it from another angle.

Qian Zhongshu was born into a family of scholars of national history and he was thoroughly versed in Chinese traditional scholarship. As far as Western learning was concerned, he was schooled in two religious middle schools where all of the teaching materials were of foreign origin. His intense interest in Western literature was sparked by Lin Shu's translations of over one hundred different foreign pieces of fiction. As he recounts: "Those two little trunks containing The Commercial Press' *A Collection of Fiction Translated by Lin Shu* was a momentous discovery of mine at age 11 or 12. It introduced me to a completely new world, a world far removed from the world of *The Water Margin*, *Journey to the West* or *Strange Tales from A Chinese Studio*."

After graduating from middle school, Qian Zhongshu won entry to Tsinghua University where he received four years of systematic nurturing in equal parts of Chinese and foreign literature in the Foreign Languages Department. At the time, Tsinghua's Foreign Languages Department intentionally directed students to read foreign literature in order to "create China's new literature," also encouraging students to "Meld Eastern and Western consciousness and ideology and facilitate mutual exchange and dissemination."[15] These nurturing guidelines determined the school's balanced Sino-Western pedagogical model. In 1933, the 23-year-old Qian Zhongshu graduated from Tsinghua, and in the following two years whilst teaching at Shanghai's Guanghua University he published a collection of traditional style poems, *The Poems of Master Zhongshu*, as well as a lengthy essay *Tragedy in China's Classical Drama Canon*, which was published in the First Issue of the First Volume of the English monthly *T'ien Hsia* which had been recently established in Shanghai. Two years later, Qian Zhongshu won a Boxer Indemnity Scholarship and in 1935 made his way to the University of Oxford's Exeter College to study English Literature. With his thesis, "China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," he was awarded an Oxford Bachelor's degree. Following that, he continued his studies at the University of Paris for one year, returning to China in 1938. During his sojourn in England and France, Qian Zhongshu

[14]See Fu Sinian's review of *Song-Yuan xiqu shi,* which is included as an appendice to *Song Yuan xiqu shi*, intro. by Ye Changhai (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998).

[15]Wu Mi, "Waiguo yuwenxi xuecheng yi lan," in *Qinghua daxue yi lan*, 1937.

personally experienced the quintessence of Western culture and thus enhanced his inside knowledge of that culture.

Having familiarized himself with both Chinese and Western cultures, Qian Zhongshu's initial foray into scholarly enquiry took the direction of comparative literature. His first scholarly treatise, "Tragedy in China's Classical Drama Canon" was published in 1935 in the English language Shanghai monthly *T'ien Hsia*. As has been noted above, by the beginning of the 1930s, comparative literature had already entered the higher education institutions as an academic discipline, however most institutes continued to employ European definitions of comparative literature and its content. It could not yet be seen as true cross-cultural literary research. It can be said that "Tragedy in China's Classical Drama Canon" constituted the earliest example of real cross-cultural literary research. This treatise exhaustively analyzed the different understandings of the term "tragedy" in the Chinese and European contexts. He conducted a thorough comparison of Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* and Dryden's *All For Love* with Bai Renfu's *Rain on the Paulownia Tree* and Hong Sheng's *Immortal Palace* and pointed out the considerable similarities between the two [types of tragedy], however such Western-style tragic elements as "sublime grief, a consciousness that 'Two spirits inhabit my breast' or how a unilateral virtuousness can lead to an awareness of a general evil" are very seldom mentioned. After the reader has read these works, having invested so much passion in the work, they are engulfed by an intense and helpless feeling of the pain of loss rather than Sinoza's so-called calm following "a realization of eternal destiny." In essence, it is a matter of the reader's or audience's "individualized 'empathy' which has not yet been raised to a higher level of experience." And in fact "The distinctive features of the structure of these plays intensify the reader experience. Having revealed the principal tragic event, they do not omit to deal with the after-effects of the tragedy. Following the most passionate and deeply painful moment of tragedy, as the curtain slowly falls, so too does the passion and pain subside." Obviously, it is true that when making a comparison with a completely different body of literature or when he views one type of literature in the light of another literature, Qian Zhongshu manages an analysis of Chinese drama that has never been attempted before and demonstrates how in terms of dramatic performance or poetic artistry, China's classical opera genres all possess their own unique values. At the same time, Qian Zhongshu pointed out that at the time "There is currently an upsurge in popularity of ancient Chinese literature in the West, and the reaction to ancient Chinese drama is especially intense." This is because "Readers in the West are fed up with tedious realism and plays about questions that bore people, while Chinese drama offers them a respite from the pressure of constant moral interrogation," so it is obvious how absolutely vital complementarities and interaction between the literatures of different cultures really is.

From this starting point, Qian Zhongshu reaches an extremely important conclusion in his thesis, a conclusion that can be seen as mandating the future direction of comparative literature in China. He writes:

> I have always believed that if the practitioners of comparative literature were able to introduce Chinese classical literature into their research horizon, they would discover many new research materials and this could lead to a major revision of the dogmata critica that Western critics have established. As to those who are engaged in the history of classical Chinese literary criticism, it is especially important to study specific works, because it is only thus that they will come to understand that the materials that classical Chinese critics were presented with are completely different to that which Western critics are dealing with, and also why Chinese critics have not yet adopted some of the prime principles of Western literary criticism, and vice versa. This is our consistent objective in many aspects of our research into Chinese classical literature. In order to augment certain of our esthetic experiences, we must approach foreign literature; and in order to augment others of our esthetic experiences, we need to return to ourselves. Of course, it is unacceptable for us in our literary research to undervalue our own literature, and to refuse to accept the achievements of foreign literature out of a feeling of 'patriotism' is even less acceptable.

All of Qian Zhongshu's works of this period are constructed around these theories. Take for example three essays published in English in *The China Critic*: "On 'Old Chinese Poetry'" (1933), "Myth, Nature and Individual" (1934) and "A critical study of Modern Aesthetics" (1934). His Oxford University thesis "China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century" was also published in June and December 1941 in *The China Critic*.[16] In addition, there are "A Characteristic Feature in Traditional Chinese Literary Criticism" (published in 1937 in Vol. 1, Issue 4 of *Wenxue zazhi* [Journal of Literature], "Chinese Poetry and Chinese Painting"[17] (published in 1940 in the 6th issue of *Guoshi yuekan* [National Teachers' Monthly]), "On Chinese poetry" (published on 10th and 14th of December, 1945 in *Da Gong Bao*, all written in Chinese, as well as "Matteo Ricci and Chinese Society 1551–1610"[18] published in the latter part of the 1940s in the English language *Philobiblon* (June, 1946) and "The 'Returning home' metaphor" (March, 1947), etc.

Qian Zhongshu believed that all peoples were interconnected and that literature which reveals humanity is also interconnected, and what he sought was precisely this connecting *wen xin* or "literary mind." In "On Chinese Poetry" he labors the fact that there can be "Western qualities" in Chinese poetry and that there can also be "Chinese elements" in Western poetry; perhaps in China, these elements might be "scattered" or "weak" while being "forthrightly and consummately" developed on the Western side—and the opposite can also be the case. Chinese poetry is first and foremost "poetry," and this attribute is more important than the fact that it is "Chinese." "Just like a human being, no matter whether Chinese, American, or English, one is always a human being." And it is precisely for this reason that "when reading foreign poetry, every time you are fortunate enough to meet an old friend in that foreign clime, it will lead you back to [appreciating] the poetry of your

[16]Collected in Adrian Hsia (ed.), *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1998).

[17]For English translation see Duncan M. Campbell (trans.), *Patchwork*, pp. 29–78.

[18]This is a critical review of R. P. Henri Bernard's work *Le Père Matthieu Ricci et la Société Chinoise de son temps (1551–1610).*

own native land."[19] Using this type of theoretical framework, Qian Zhongshu completed his *On the Art of Poetry* between 1939 and 1942.

The purpose of *On the Art of Poetry* was to "discuss art and assess literature" and it cited "more than one thousand" items from Chinese and foreign literature. In total it "drew from the works of over 500 masters of Western philosophy, aesthetics and literature, from Plato and Aristotle to Kant and Hegel right through to Goethe, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Ingarden." It included from Western classical literary knowledge and theory right up to such contemporary literary theories as psychoanalysis, formalism, structuralism, new criticism, and included the newly established schools of surrealism, reception aesthetics, deconstructionism and more. The Chinese material included "130 examples" of poetry from various schools across history,[20] with all representative works in the history of Chinese poetry included, virtually "without exception." The range of authors touched on in the work was extremely broad, including both the great and famous as well as a significant number of others who were unfamiliar even to the native reader, clearly demonstrating the "completely unpretentious" nature of Qian Zhongshu's scholarship. The main theme of the work is as Qian Zhongshu says in the foreword to the first edition: "to extensively adopt books from the two "Wests" so inferences [about foreign culture] can be drawn." His so-called "examination" includes "textual criticism" and "proof." Indeed, as he wrote in "Chinese Poetry and Chinese Painting" , scholarly research ought first of all to "determine facts," and then "seek explanations" of which the former is equivalent to "examining" and the latter to "expounding." The so-called *er Xi* [two Wests] refers to the Christian "West" and the Sakyamuni Buddhist "West," or in other words Euro-American and classical Indian works. In this treatise on China's *shi hua ti* or "remarks on poetry genre" which "probes China's traditional poetics as its primary aim," the author draws extensively on the phenomenon of "mutual reflection and inspiration" in the "works of the two Wests" as well as Chinese classical literature, and consequently demonstrates the existence of common literary rules or patterns and thus achieves the aim of "selecting one to refute the many." In the same preface, Qian Zhongshu reemphasizes the fact that "East or West, psychologically they are the same although physically distant; North or South—there is no difference in their method of explaining the *Dao* [or Way]." His "North or South" analogy does not mean that we should establish a standard by which a work can be deemed to belong to a certain literary type and thus determine that it is "universally applicable" (because no cultural standard is able to completely divorce itself from the limitations of its own culture), but the challenge is to identify those elements that interconnect all cultures.

Qian Zhongshu believed that no culture was completely homogeneous, nor could it be. He had pointed out that those who were obsessed with discussing

[19]Qian Zhongshu, "Tan Zhongguo shi", *Da Gong Bao*, 10th December, 1945.

[20]Lu Wenhu, "Qian Zhongshu *Tanyi lu* de jige tedian," in *Qian Zhongshu yanjiu,* Vol. 1 (Beijing: Beijing wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1989).

"the distinguishing characteristics of Eastern and Western cultures" often argued that "a certain item represents authentic Eastern-ness, whilst a certain thing represents authentic Western-ness," however "in fact that object, not only in name but also in reality, is both Eastern and Western." By way of example, he writes: "For example, in China's ancient literature there is a *bi-xing* style poem 'Vanilla Belle' which uses the love between a youth and a lass to symbolize the relationship between a prince and his ministers. Those dissolute worthies who are familiar with Western learning argue that this beauty-destroying view of literature and art is in the final analysis a unique product of China's ancient culture, but in Western religious poetry we can surprisingly find a similar device, except that in that poetry the prince-minister relationship is replaced by the god-man relationship. Western literature from the Middle Ages is especially full of works in this *bi-xing* style, and Dante is one obvious example." Qian Zhongshu went on to conclude that the so-called *Guo cui* or "national treasures" and the *Yang huo* or "Western goods" are invariably not "special symbols" of Chinese or Western cultures, but are rather like a "Pug-Pekingese cross," "both Eastern and Western."[21]

Beginning from this fact of original interconnectedness, Qian Zhongshu argued that the most important method of literary research was to tease out this path of convergence, and especially the path of convergence of Chinese and foreign literature. In other words, we have to penetrate the reality and identify the most fundamental, the most resonant aspects of their shared nucleus. He argued: "As the object of Chinese and Western [literature] is not the same, therefore their theories are different," but we should not rashly discount the possibility of there being any congruence between the two, "because two different theories can adhere to the one principle." For example, "Chinese essays speak of *ping-ze* or level and oblique tones while Western works speak of light and heavy tones; the taboos in Western poetry do not equate to China's four tones and Eight Tonal Defects, yet both adhere to the principle of tonal harmony, so while they are different, they can be considered equivalent." In other words, "speaking of level and oblique tones" and "speaking of light and heavy tones," these two "different theories" in Chinese and Western rhetoric still "conform to the same principle" or "differ in appearance but are one in substance" and therefore we should not conclude that the existence of these two theories demonstrates a "specificity" that shows that Chinese and Western literary criticism is incongruent, nor should they be viewed as anything "specific" or "unique" to Chinese or Western culture.[22] And so in the study of the literature of different cultures, we must not only look for "similarities" but we should also identify their "congruities" or "interconnectedness." What this kind of "interconnectedness" avoids most assiduously is one-sidedness and mutual isolation. Qian Zhongshu emphasizes the point that we should not be constrained by "temporality" or "spatiality," but that we should link up the Chinese and foreign, the ancient and

[21]Qian Zhongshu, *Zhongguo guyou de wenxue piping de yige tedian* in *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, 1937.

[22]Ibid.

the contemporary. Sometimes we can know the taste of a water body from just one sip because all the water in that body is identical. But sometimes, even from the same river, the water in its headwaters and its lower reaches are different. Therefore, we will always observe in any given period of time the traces of a former era and in that juxtaposition, note the differences and thus find a way to make a link between the two. This is what we call "riding in tandem." Thus, the so-called *da-tong* or "making connections" principle not only embodied a transcendence of the China/foreign dichotomy, but it also subsumed a shattering of boundaries between ancient and modern, refined and popular, or words and content. From the standpoint of cross-cultural literary research, "drawing deeply from both China and the West" refers to a "mutual affirmation" and "mutual recognition" of Chinese and Western literature. It takes a huge swathe of real examples from the literature of different cultures and demonstrates the existence of a type of common "literary mind." As the renowned French scholar of comparative literature, R. Etiemble notes: "Not to have read *Journey to the West* is just like not having read Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky. And from that to then go on and talk about the theory of fiction is indeed a brave act." By this Etiemble means that if we only restrict ourselves to the study of the works of fiction of one region (such as western Europe) and do not include the fiction of other regions of the world (including Chinese and Russian fiction) and thereby reach a rounded understanding, then one should not prate about "theory of fiction" because any so-called "theory of fiction" or "literary theory" which is distilled from a reading of just one region's fiction or literature will always be one-sided and lack any "universal quality" and hence cannot be relied upon. This is also as Claudio Guillen, once director of the faculty of comparative literature at Harvard University, wrote: Debates in general literary theory can be settled only when the two systems of poetry (Chinese and Western) know each other and reflect on each other. "Only when the two great poetic realms (i.e., Chinese and Western poetry) recognize each other and consider each other will the usual grand controversies of literary theory begin to be comprehensively dealt with."[23] The practice of mutual observation or "mutual illumination" between Chinese and Western letters is also a process of "bi-directional elucidation." On the one hand, it represents a more profound decoding of one culture by another, and at the same time it means a reflection on one's own culture through the prism of an understanding of another, or deepening one's understanding of oneself from a different angle. This kind of "bi-directional elucidation" was further developed in his later work entitled *Guan zhui bian* or *Limited Views*.

While Qian Zhongshu probed the idea of a common literary mind, he also noted the importance of the differences and distinguishing features of different cultures. His championing of China's *dianpingshi shihua* or traditional commentary-style remarks on poetry is a case in point. On the one hand, he criticized the Western scholastic tendency to emphasize system and structure and he pointed out the common failing of "theoretical systems" from a variety of angles. Meanwhile, on

[23]Taken from Ye Weilian, *Bijiao wenxue congshu* (Taipei: Dongda tushugongsi, 1983).

the other hand, he offered a ringing endorsement of the academic value of "fragmented ideology." *On the Art of Poetry* is a modern poetic work completed in the modern academic context in the style of China's traditional *dianping* or poetic "commentary."

In his concluding remarks to "Longfellow's 'A Psalm of Life'—the First English Poem Translated into Chinese—and Several Other Related Matters,"[24] Qian Zhongshu raised the issue of the common failing of "theoretical systems," stating: "History contains many such examples of illogic—as does the present as well of course—or to put it more precisely, instances w[h]ere historical reality does not accord with the ideals and theories of scholars… Over the course of history, the occurrence and development of things always creates difficulties for us, playing practical jokes on us and overturning all our most cast-iron judgments, besmirching our blueprints and tearing holes, both large and small, in all our most airtight, watertight densely argued theoretical systems."[25] These "theoretical systems" are invariably constructed by academics according to their own "ideals" and "theories," but there is an unavoidable gap between "ideals" and reality. As Qian Zhongshu pointed out, "the blueprints that we etch out" are invariably "erased" by historical reality. Many great thinkers' conceptions of the model of human social development invariably fail to gel with "the rise and development of objects" during the progress of history. There is always a discrepancy between what scholars deduce in "theory" and the actual situation; the incontrovertible rules that they set down are invariably "overthrown" by historical reality.

Unlike this grand scheme, however, *shi-hua* or "remarks on poetry" is a kind of "fragmented" form of literary criticism, employed by a procession of scholars ever since the Tang Dynasty. Unlike the recent ubiquitous Western research model which emphasized rules and logic, China's remarks on poetry invariably consisted of several fragments of knowledge that were not directly related or which were not logically connected and are stitched together. Their structure is relatively relaxed and the content is relatively heterogeneous—and the writing style on the whole is relatively undisciplined. And it is for this reason that the myriad of esoteric musings of the writers, their tastes and their inclinations—even their aesthetic predilections and their life interests—could all be genuinely expressed and they approximated more closely people's lived experience, mirrored more closely the works under review, and thus were more "literary" and more "readable." Since the dawn of the twentieth century, the Western research model has progressively assumed a mainstream status, and the traditional Chinese literary criticism model has been relegated to the sidelines. In his "Chinese Poetry and Chinese Painting,"[26] Qian Zhongshu argued that "remarks on poetry" was a special form in the world of Chinese letters and that its development not only offered unprecedented potential for the expansion of literary and artistic research, but it was also a rebuttal to the

[24]For English translation see Duncan M. Campbell (trans.), *Patchwork*, pp. 211–246.

[25]Ibid., pp. 245–246.

[26]Ibid., pp. 29–78.

"formalist" tendency in literary and artistic research. Concomitantly, "remarks on poetry" paid more attention to "concrete appreciation and appraisal," or in other words, it placed more emphasis on concrete textual analysis and esthetic evaluation. Qian Zhongshu believed that "remarks on poetry" which "selected sentences for evaluation" and "[Chinese style] commentary" which "was made with direct reference to the text" could complement those critics who lacked a sense of the need for concrete analysis, who "only saw the forest" and "not the trees."

In fact, Qian Zhongshu had long since noted this gap in the "grand system" of Western culture. As Engels put it: "With all philosophers it is precisely the 'system' which is perishable … If one does not loiter here needlessly, but presses on farther into the immense building, one finds innumerable treasures which today still possess undiminished value."[27] In making a contrast with the western *da tixi* or "grand system," Qian Zhongshu amply demonstrated the superiority and distinctive nature of traditional Chinese poetry.

The renaissance of the comparative literature in China was heralded by the publication of Qian Zhongshu's monumental *Limited Views* in 1979. *Limited Views* comprehensively, richly and consummately recognized comparative literature as a "most expansive, most unconstrained" "fringe academic discipline," a discipline that "could not be completely subsumed by any scientific or literary research system."

The four volume *Limited Views* was written during the ten tumultuous years of the Cultural Revolution. The author, in some 781 chapters which were developed around some ten classic works including *Zhouyi Zhengyi* [The True Meaning of the Book of Changes] and *Maoshi Zhengyi* [The True Meaning of the Book of Songs], utilizes more than one thousand different works by more than eight hundred foreign scholars and synthesizes more than three thousand Chinese and foreign writers to offer his own personal insights from a life of reading.

The basic premise of the whole work is the steadfast conviction that "the object of every branch of the humanities is interconnected, mutually pervading, not only across national boundaries, but across epochs and threaded through unrelated branches of science."[28] Qian Zhongshu never ever attempted to impose any man-made/artificial "system" on the objective world, nor would he allow himself to be shackled by any artificial "system." He thought it futile to expend a huge amount of energy in order to establish some kind of meta-narrative. He believed that "invariably the only thing of value remaining of the whole theoretical system is a few disjointed ideas."[29] But this was not to deny the absence of discipline. On the contrary, he believed that "for art to be art, then it should be pervaded by logic, and for art to be effective, it must be totally unique"[30] and that the real pleasure in

[27]Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy—Part 1." Available at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1886ecgp/lf1.htm (4 of 6).

[28]"Shi keyi yuan" [Our Sweetest Songs], *Wenxue pinglun*, Issue 1, 1981.

[29]*Jiuwen sipian*, pp. 26–27.

[30]*Guan zhui pian* (1979), p. 1279.

scholarship was to discover those universal principles that "are hidden in the towering peaks and tiniest grains, and which when released, form an expansive landscape."[31] The greatest contribution of *Limited Views* was in its distillation of important common literary principles from the midst of these "peaks and grains" by surveying the ancient and modern and all corners of the globe. In other words, breaking through all manner of scholastic boundaries (be they time, region, science or language) and opening up the whole literary landscape in order to seek out a common "poetic heart" and "literary mind." Qian Zhongshu believed that this common "poetic heart" and "literary mind" was an objective reality. As he put it, the so-called "similarity between minds is based on the nature of reason, and the nature of reason is based on the law of things, which corresponds to the inherent nature of things."[32] Whilst exploring these common principles, he always began with concrete examples of literary phenomena and never simply deduced things. He stressed that "what I am interested in is concrete appreciation and appraisal of literature and art."[33] Appreciation and appraisal is the exact opposite of the current dangerous tendency in the world's comparative literature circles to "not make a judgment" but to simply make pure theoretical deductions. In the process of literary appreciation and appraisal, Qian Zhongshu believed that the most fundamental principle was to stick doggedly to the "actual text" of the piece of literature, and if you were to "Completely abandon what is contained within a poem and seek for things external to it, then it is like ignoring things nearby whilst hoping to obtain something by reaching up to heaven or down to the netherworld—it can be used in historiography or sermonizing but it should not be used in artistic appreciation."[34] To his mind, if you are going to "discuss art," and then you must begin from the actual work itself. If you merely employ some kind of trendy terminology to deliberately mystify the piece, then it will benefit no one. He gave a few examples of a number of contemporary French and American literary critics who misused structuralism, criticizing the theories of such individuals as Julia Kristeva.[35] But that is certainly not to say that Qian Zhongshu did not value theory. On the contrary, he always strove to cast aside any trivial, peripheral interference in order to grasp the general development trajectory of an object. He advocated that in order to "reduce a complicated scenario into two or three major matters" in order to facilitate "acute foresight," there must be "an absence of any knots or tangles that could disturb the line of sight"[36] and only then can the true essence of an object be discovered. For this reason, he argued that the fundamental flaw in Chinese-style commentary was in the fact that it regularly took "minor facets as the focus of their

[31]Ibid., p. 296.
[32]Ibid., p. 50.
[33]*Jiuwen sipian*, p. 7.
[34]*Guan zhui pian*, p. 110.
[35]"Qian Zhongshu tan bijiao wenxue he 'wenxue bijiao'", *Du Shu*, Issue 10, 1981.
[36]*Jiuwen sipian*, p. 3.

attention whilst ignoring the main issue of the source of artistic creation."[37] He personally and consistently devoted himself to exploring "the source of artistic creation," and in addition paid close attention to the numerous new theories emerging abroad. Despite the 10 years of chaos [i.e., the Cultural Revolution 1966–1976] when the nation was in lock-down, whilst writing Limited Views he continued to utilize the latest modern foreign theories wherever possible, theories which ranged across all fields including semantics, semiotics, style, psychology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, the history of ideas, systems theory, physiology, and more.

Not only did *Limited Views* probe the shared "poetic heart" and "literary mind" of Chinese and Western literature, but it also made an original contribution to all aspects of comparative literature. Because of the limitations on its subject matter, *Limited Views* did not cover the theories of origin and influence extensively, but it nevertheless did offer some extremely important observations. For example, Qian Zhongshu pointed out: when undertaking research into the subjects of origin and influence, one must avoid "illegitimately claiming a familial connection" at all costs. Because circumstances are complex: "Theories often coincide without any evidence of influence—like the relationship between the theories of Laozi and Zhuang Zi and that of Buddhism." Therefore one cannot arbitrarily claim that A borrows or learns from B just by their superficial similarities, otherwise one will, like some Qing scholars, claim that Western religion and science are all derived from *Mozi* and that political canons and national systems derive from the *Zhou guan* [Civil Service of the Zhou Dynasty].[38] When undertaking this research into origins, Qian Zhongshu himself consistently "touched on a subject and left it there" and never forced his conclusions. For example, when discussing the so-called "how Chinese can glimpse a sliver and from this recognize an age" origins of Baudelaire's prose poetry in "Fleurs du mal—Le Chat" and "Langhuan Ji"[39]; or how early Western fiction regularly mentioned "taking medicine that induces temporary death, leading to an inevitable reunion of lovers" or how *The Tale of Wushuang* relates that "the Daoist priest on Mao Mountain has a potion which brings instant death to anyone who takes it and after three days he will come back to life … Liu Wushuang took it."[40] Qian Zhongshu discussed research into influence more rarely, but this does not mean that he attached little importance to it. As he once emphasized: "Comparative literature is research which rises above the scope of the literature of a specific race, and therefore the mutual relations between the literatures of different countries is naturally the domain of comparative literature research … If we wish to develop our own comparative literature research, one of

[37] *Guan zhui pian*, p. 1215.
[38] *Guan zhui pian*, p. 440.
[39] *Guan zhui pian*, p. 816.
[40] *Guan zhui pian*, p. 836.

our important duties is to tidy up the mutual relationship between Chinese and foreign literature."[41]

Limited Views devotes many pages to so-called "elucidatory research" which used Western literary theories to explain Chinese literary phenomena. Not only did Qian Zhongshu advocate "bi-directional elucidation" (he contemporaneously used Chinese theory to elucidate Western literary works) but he regularly offered incisive criticisms of the mistakes of Western scholars who only superficially expounded Chinese theories. For example, he argued that the Japanese monk Kūkai's *Bunkyō hifuron* "is in fact a child's primer, sufficient for teachers to use to enlighten school pupils." Or that Westerners often quoted Lu Ji's (261–303 C.E.) *Wenfu* or *Poetic Exposition on Literature* because "the translators are ignorant and in the process, stretch a point ridiculously."[42]

On the subject of interdisciplinary research, Qian Zhongshu consistently emphasized the "interconnectedness" between the different disciplines and moreover very early pointed out that "we should rely more on the newly emerging branches of science—and especially on psychology and physiology."[43] In *Limited Views* he argued that all disciplines used many examples from literature. For example, on page 531 he uses Western psychology's "association by contiguity" and physiology's "conditioned reflex" to explain *Zhao Family Orphan*; or on page 589 he uses aesthetics, rhetoric and Indian Hetuvidyā logic to explain that "the cleverest poetic devices are those of *xu* (the void/unmentioned) and *han* (the hidden meaning)," etc.

Limited Views is also the sole work to touch on the question of translating research on media. Qian Zhongshu points out that "there are translations that are fluent but not faithful, but there is never a translation that is not fluent but faithful."[44] Thus, the highest aim of literary translation is *hua* (conversion/rendition). If it is possible, despite a difference in literary and linguistic habits, to avoid creating persistent and inappropriate vestiges and to completely preserve the original flavor whilst translating the product of one nation's literature into that of another, then one could be seen to have entered the realm of *hua*. "A translation should be faithful to the original such that when it is read, it does not feel like a translation because in its original form, the work will certainly not read as if it had been translated."[45]

In sum, from any angle, *Limited Views* can be seen as having forged the path for Chinese comparative literature. In contrast to the "prejudiced and stilted theoretical" direction of current world comparative literature scholarship, this work intimately links concrete Chinese and Western artistic practice and ultimately realizes a common international "literary mind" and "poetic heart" and makes an outstanding and innovative contribution to the development of Sino-Western comparative

[41] *Du Shu*, op. cit.

[42] *Guan zhui bian*, pp. 1449, 1177.

[43] "Haiwai chuban jie", see *Xin yue yuekan*, Vol. 4, Issue 5.

[44] *Jiuwen sipian*, pp. 62–63.

[45] *Bijiao wenxue yanjiu yiwenji*, pp. 198, 206.

literature. If it is true that the discipline of comparative literature demands that one must engage with others' "capacity for extraordinary ability … and their potential to display even greater originality," then Qian Zhongshu can be said to have ably displayed this kind of ability and character. If we are to accept that what comparative literature today calls for is more "illustrious exemplars and not abstract methodological formulae,"[46] then *Limited Views* is just such an "exemplar."

2.3 Zhu Guangqian—the New Pioneer of Expository Research

Zhu Guangqian was born in Tongcheng County in Anhui Province in 1897. He was a descendant of the great Southern Song philosopher Zhu Xi.

When he was 15 years old, Zhu Guangqian entered his local Western-style school which was implementing the new-style education—the Tongcheng Advanced Elementary School. He only attended for one semester before he moved to the renowned Tongcheng Middle School, a school established by Wu Rulun, grand master of the Tongcheng Faction. Wu Rulun's aim was to nurture talents capable of bridging and melding the scholarships of China and the West.

In 1918 when he was 21 years old, Zhu Guangqian won a government funded scholarship to study in the Education Faculty of the University of Hong Kong. At HKU he studied English language and literature, pedagogy, biology, and psychology. This period of study of psychology had a tremendous influence on Zhu Guangqian's academic research in the years that followed. He went on to offer outstanding contributions to the psychology of tragedy and of the literature and art in general, benefitting greatly from his study at this time. Whilst at HKU, Zhu Guangqian's favorite subject was English literature. Reading Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, Dickens' *David Copperfield* and *A Tale of Two Cities* and more, he especially admired the English romantic literature as represented by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the pervasive individualist spirit and sense of melancholy and pathos expressed in their works resonating deeply with him. He also developed a deep fascination with philosophy. At the time, Aubrey, who taught him Ethics and who had himself graduated in the Classics from the University of Oxford and was especially fond of classical Greek philosophy, introduced Zhu Guangqian for the first time to Plato and Aristotle. In 1943, Zhu Guangqian wrote "My Memories of HKU after a Quarter of a Century" [*Huiyi ershiwu nianqian de Xianggang daxue*] in which he stressed the influence of Aubrey on himself, saying: "Thanks to your inspiration, I have often, over the intervening 20 years or more, drawn new inspiration to shore up my existence from Greek literature and art and philosophy.

[46]Ibid.

I have also learned, to the best of my own feeble abilities, how to try to treasure the value of the spirit."[47]

In 1925 Zhu Guangqian was awarded a government sponsored scholarship from Anhui Province to study abroad in England and entered the Arts Faculty at the University of Edinburgh. He first studied English literature, philosophy, psychology, ancient European history, and the history of art and literature. During his 8 years of study in Europe, he delved deeply into such individuals as Benedetto Croce, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Kant and was profoundly influenced by them. He notes: "My first contact with Western literature was via romantic ballads. The fundamental requirement of romanticism is the unfettered extension of the individual emotional imagination" and "In terms of basic world view, romanticism in literature and German idealist philosophy are one … Kant was the primogenitor of German idealist philosophy, and the same can be said of formalist aesthetics. He was also the first to articulate such slogans as transcending utility, passive observation and pure form. Benedetto Croce and his theories were close to Hegel in terms of aesthetics, and more to the point, even closer to Kant … Because of my study of literary and artistic criticism, I first came into contact with Croce, who at the time occupied a commanding position in the world of bourgeois aesthetics, and subsequently I viewed other figures such as Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Henri Bergson through his eyes."[48] Here Zhu Guangqian systematically traces the origins of the influence of Western thought on himself.

Zhu Guangqian stresses: "All values are developed through the process of comparison."[49] In his work *Tan quwei* [On Preference], he argues: "Art and literature do not necessarily only has one path to follow. The landscape of the East can only be seen by those travelling East and the Western landscape can only be seen by those travelling West. When the Eastward travelers hear those travelling West praise the Western landscape, they feel they are exaggerating and simultaneously pity them for not having beheld the beauty of the Eastern landscape. And those travelling West treat those travelling East in the same manner. This is so often the case and we should not make a big deal out of it. The ideal traveler would turn West and have a look after they had explored the East and so taste the flavor of both East and West. Only such individuals are qualified to assess the relative merits of both East and West."[50]

He emphasized the fact that the foundation of literary research was *zhi* [knowing], and that "ignorance of the fundamentals" was tantamount to "spiritual incapacity" and that those who are guilty of such errors lose most of the flavor of life; "Inaccurate knowledge" leads to "substandard delight" or to "spiritual poisoning" and it can also lead to a total corruption of the spirit; "incomplete knowledge"

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[47]"Huiyi ershiwu nianqian de Xianggang daxue," in *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 9, pp. 186–187.

[48]"Wode wenyi sixiang de fandongxing [The reactionary nature of my literary and artistic thought]," in *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 5, p. 15.

[49]"Tan wenxue, wenxue de quwei," in *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 4, p. 176.

[50]"Wo yu wenxue ji qita, tan quwei," in *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 3, pp. 346–347.

means that one's "tastes are too narrow," that one has a "lack of vigor." It's like "sitting in a well and observing the heavens and accusing the heavens of being too insignificant." "If we are to cure ourselves of these three types of popular ailments, then the only prescription available is comparison, expanding one's horizons and deepening one's consciousness." Comparison not only brings new knowledge, but it also leads to "mutual validation," in other words when object B is comprehended then we are able to reassess the value of object A. This is the "bi-directional elucidation" that is frequently discussed today.

Regarding the principles of comparison, Zhu Guangqian stressed that first of all, the object being compared must be understood in all of its aspects. "All theories are just like taking photographs from a variety of angles: sometimes an insignificant part of the object is photographed. If we are obsessed with a certain theory, we will be subject to partiality. In order to understand an object in its entirety, we must compare all of the shots taken from a variety of angles."[51] Second, the unique characteristics and everything to do with the object being compared must be respected. "All great poets have their precedents and followers, the so-called 'line of succession.' If we only read the works of a certain poet and do not understand his background or his mission, then there is no way we can really understand his contribution. The poetry of every nation has an unbroken lineal life history of its own. It interfuses the accomplishments of all ages and presents them to view. It is a whole, living organism and it possesses a pulse that can be discovered."[52] To his mind, every successful piece of work has its own unique individuality and even works in the same genre at times differ markedly. For example "*A Dream of Red Mansions* and *Water Margin* are both works of fiction, but they differ from normal Western fiction; *The Story of the Western Wing* and *The Swallow's Message* are dramas, but they are different from normal Western drama. If you view Madame Bovary through the prism of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, or if you look at *The Story of the Western Wing* through the lens of Romeo and Juliet, you will invariably smother the reality and be unable to recognize the sun."[53]

Thus, when comparing works, one should not simply judge different works by the same yardstick. The object under comparison must be "thoroughly comprehended and broadly compared." It must be "meticulously compared" such that the "dissimilar features" and "common literary mind" of the objects under study are identified. And again, Zhu Guangqian further emphasized the mutual corroboration of the literature between differing cultural systems. He took himself as an example, explaining: "I began to dote on Chinese poetry and appreciate its elegance [only] after I had read a few Western poems. From my research into Western poetry I came to understand the artistic quality and skill of poetry and I learned some of the methods some poets used to observe the human world and how they used language. Armed with this knowledge, I looked again at Chinese poetry and I discovered many

[51]Chapter 1 of *Beiju xinlixue*. See *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 2, p. 221.

[52]"Yanjiu shige de fangfa," in *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 9, p. 205.

[53]"Tan wenxue, wenxue yu yuwen: ticai yu fengge,". Vol. 4, p. 236.

new nuances in the poems that I had previously known intimately. When I read some traditional Chinese poetry or treatises on poetry, I silently concurred with the opinion of my forebears and occasionally discovered something that had not yet been spoken of. Such is the lot of the dilettante: if one digs deeply then one is hugely rewarded. Therefore I believe that anyone studying Chinese poetry should begin by reading Western poetry in the original language (poetry cannot be translated). The more Western poetry you read, the more precise, perhaps, will be your understanding of Chinese poetry. Western poetry can act as a mirror in which Chinese poetry can be reflected and one's self examined."[54] In fact, Zhu Guangqian here in a relatively clear manner articulates the main principles of comparative literature, i.e., that of mutual recognition, mutual affirmation, and complementarities.

In 1933 Zhu Guangqian completed his first draft of *Shi lun* [On Poetry] in Strasbourg, completing at the same time his graduating thesis "The Psychology of Tragedy," for which he was awarded his Doctor of Letters. In July of that same year he returned to China, taking up the position of Professor of Western Languages at Peking University. In 1934 and 1935, Zhu Guangqian published such seminal articles on Sino-Western comparative poetics as *Zhong-Xi shi zai qingqushang de bijiao* [A Comparison of the Delights of Chinese and Western Poetry] , *Tan quwei* [On Taste] , *Changpian shi zai Zhongguo heyi bu fada* [Why Epic Poetry Has Not Developed in China] and *Cong "julishuo" bianhu Zhongguo yishu* [Defending Chinese Art from the Perspective of 'Distance Theory'].

In "On Poetry—Preface to the Resistance War Edition," which he completed in 1942, Zhu Guangqian again stressed that: "All values are developed through the process of comparison. If there is no comparison then there is no basis for judging a work's merits or otherwise. Currently Western poetry and poetic theory has begun to infiltrate China and our materials for comparison are much richer than previously so we should grasp this opportunity and investigate precisely where the good and bad in our poetic composition and theory actually lie and whether the contribution of Westerners can in fact be borrowed." Under the illumination of Western poetics, *On Poetry* attempts a thorough analysis of these types of comparative social, political and ethico-moral causes. *On Poetry* takes Chinese literature as its focus and comprehensively discusses all aspects such as the origins of poetry, its relationship with allegory, the appeal, and imagery of poetry, the relationship between thoughts and feelings on the one hand and language and text on the other, poetry and prose, poetry and music, or poetry and painting. In sum, Zhu Guangqian's comparative research on Sino-Western poetics can be said to have the following salient characteristics:

Point 1: It is a highly generalized study which utilizes a multitude of practical examples to minutely examine the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western literary phenomena, very rarely using isolated examples to prove a point. For example, when comparing Chinese and Western romantic poetry, Zhu Guangqian points out: "Most Western poetry which discusses human relationships

[54]"Yanjiu shige de fangfa," Ibid. Vol. 9, p. 209.

focuses on romantic love. Naturally, many Chinese poems also speak of love, but it does not permit love to eclipse all other human relationships. The affection between friends and the grace and friendship between prince and minster is not a major theme in Western verse, but in Chinese poetry this occupies a comparable status to that of love. If we were to remove the loyalty to their prince and their patriotism and love of their fellow countrymen from Qu Yuan, Du Fu or Lu You, then the quintessence of their poetry would be largely diminished." Zhu Guangqian argues that romantic love was certainly not as important in China in the past as modern day Chinese people might think and that in Chinese poetry, speaking of friendship was far, far more important than speaking of love. He continues: "In the collections of many poets, works such as dedications, replies, ripostes, or odes invariably occupy the greater part. The friendship between Su Wu and Li Ling, The Seven Jian'an Worthies, Li Bai and Du Fu, Han Yu and Meng Jiao, Su Dongpo and Huang Tingjian, or Nalan Chengde and Gu Zhenguan have from ancient times to the present day been recounted as respected anecdotes whilst among the Western poets, although Goethe and Schiller, Wordsworth and Coleridge, Keats and Shelly or Verlaine and Rimbaud also wrote works declaiming their friendship, nevertheless their collections contain very little beyond poems about the joy of their friendship."[55] He also goes on to say: "Most Western love poetry describes the period before marriage and therefore praise of beauty and declarations of love concern the great majority. Chinese love poetry, meanwhile, describe a couple after marriage and hence the best works describe a reluctance to part or lamenting a death. Western love poetry is best at "admiration." Shakespeare's sonnets, and Shelly and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's short poems are the pinnacle of "admiration." Chinese love poetry, on the other hand, specialize in *yuan* or angst, including *Juan'er* [The Cocklebur], *Baizhou* [The Cypress Boat] , *Tiaotiao Tianniuxing* [The Distant Cowherd Star], or Cao Pi's *Yange xing* [Ode to Those Serving in Yan] , Liang Xuandi's *Dangfu qiusi fu* [Autumn Thoughts on a Floozy] and Li Bai's *Changxiang si* [Thinking of my Love] , *Yuanqing* [Resentment] and *Chunsi* [Spring Thoughts] are all triumphs in 'angst.'"[56] He concludes that: "Western poets attempt to realize life through love, while Chinese poets invariably only seek to while away life through love. Chinese poets are sober, believing love is simply love. Westerners, on the other hand, are able to rise above it, finding some philosophy of life and religious sentiments in love."[57] From an artistic perspective, "Western poetry excels in its frankness while Chinese poetry triumphs in its use of euphemism; Western poetry is victorious in its profundity and Chinese poetry in its subtlety; Western poetry is consummate in its detailed narration, while Chinese poetry is adept in its unembellished moment."[58] All of these points utilize a huge body of practical examples to reveal the true nature of poetry and through a

[55]"Tan Zhong-Xi aiqing shi," Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 483.

[56]"Zhong-Xi shi zai qingqushang de bijiao," *in Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 3, p. 76.

[57]Ibid.

[58]"Tan Zhong-Xi aiqing shi," in *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 9, p. 485.

multifaceted comparison between the two sides he achieves a mutual recognition whilst at the same time deepening one's own sense of self-realization.

Point 2: After enumerating different poetic phenomena, Zhu Guangqian does not stop with the phenomenon itself, but goes further and delves deeply into the social, historical, and ethico-moral origins of these differences, and more. For example, on the reasons for the difference between Chinese and Western romantic poetry, Zhu Guangqian made an analysis and pointed out that there are three principal causes: "First of all, whilst Western society superficially acknowledges the state as the foundation, in its essence it emphasizes individualism, and love as the central preoccupation of an individual's life, hence its comprehensive development such that it eclipses all other human relationships. Chinese society, meanwhile, also superficially acknowledges the family as its foundation, but at its core it stresses virtue and the literati invariably spend the greater part of their lives either in official service or in travel. 'Late marriage and assignment to distant places' is common. Their daily contact is not with women, but with colleagues and fellow literati. In reality, the West has been influenced by the chivalry of the medieval knight and the position of women is quite elevated. Their education is also more rounded and in terms of scholarship and inclination they are much more able to get along with men. In China satisfaction is gained through the delight of friends whilst in the West, that same satisfaction is derived from wives and women in general. China has been influenced by Confucian thought and the position of women is comparatively low. The conjugal love between man and wife often arises from ethical considerations and in reality; pleasure derived through like-mindedness is not easily attained. If we add to this the fact that China's social ideal privileges activities relating to achieving fame, then the practice of 'hanging off the skirt-tails of the fourth madam' is a matter of shame in the eyes of a Confucian. So in fact, attitudes toward romantic love differ greatly between East and West. Westerners emphasize romantic love and they boast an adage of 'love is king.' Chinese people, meanwhile, stress marriage and play down romantic love and real romantic love is invariably viewed as 'liaisons in the shrubbery.' Disappointed and bored, only pessimistic and demoralized individuals are willing to publicly declare their emotion and denounce the world like Sui Yangdi and Li Houzhu."[59]

Point 3: Whilst comparing Chinese and Western poetry, Zhu Guangqian strenuously avoided bias and the absolute, but it is extremely difficult to sum up succinctly the distinguishing features of a culture or of a certain type of poetry. For example, he pointed out: "Western poetry tends towards determination whilst Chinese poetry tends towards compliance. Western poets naturally love the ocean, raging storms, towering crags and desolate valleys—all daytime prospects. Meanwhile, Chinese poets prefer verdant vistas and sweeping willows, gentle breezes and benign showers, shimmering lakes and radiant mountains—all moonlit scenes."[60] This type of summation must unavoidably rely on the part to represent

[59]"Zhong-Xi shi zai qingqushang de bijiao," in *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 3, p. 75.

[60]Ibid., p. 77.

the whole. Nor could Zhu Guangqian avoid pointing out the limitations of this type of generalized comparison. He wrote: "The West has never lacked poems of tender beauty, and China has never wanted for poems of strident beauty, but tenderness in the West and stridence in China were never their exclusive distinguishing feature."[61] More importantly, this kind of generalized comparison invariably reveals the subjective attitudes and preconceived ideas of the person making the comparison, and when later scholars revisit the comparison, these attitudes and ideas should be one of the objects of their comparative analysis. For example, Zhu Guangqian reached the following conclusion: "Western poetry is deeper and more sweeping than Chinese poetry because its roots are nurtured by a relatively deeper and more sweeping philosophical and religious tradition. If there were no Plato or Spinoza, there would be no idealism and pantheism as represented by Goethe, Wordsworth or Shelly. If it weren't for religion, there would be no Greek tragedy, Dante's *Divine Comedy* or Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Surprisingly, from a barren and desolate soil, China has produced marvels of extraordinary splendor. And although this may be an achievement that is to be lauded, nevertheless, when compared to Western poetry, inadequacy invariably remains. I love Chinese poetry and in terms of charm and subtlety, style and elegance, Western poetry could never compare, but when it comes to depth and grandeur, I have never been able to deny it." This unavoidably reveals the subjective view and preferences of the comparer, especially how he does not shy away from appraising Chinese literature by taking Western literature as his main subject. Perhaps many are unable to endorse such a conclusion, but whilst attempting a new comparison of Chinese and Western poetry, this assessment itself also becomes an object of research and can still be considered a very valuable point of reference.

Soon after *On Poetry* appeared, the renowned scholar Zhang Shilu pointed out: "Every article referred to in this work of Zhu's, every question in the discussion of verse, all employ Western literary and artistic theories in order to cross-reference and make a comparison with China's traditional theories and to use real Chinese poetic examples for examination and verification purposes. This is already sufficient to demonstrate that this is a necessary method of studying Chinese literature. From another angle, we should not blindly follow all Western theories. We are always able to blend a multitude of theories, adopt the good and reject the bad and from the mix select one of the most relevant theories and use this as an arbiter. Moreover, sometimes in view of the Chinese reality or relying on a traditional Chinese theory we can turn and correct some of the shortcomings in Western theories. This is what we mean by accepting scholarship from abroad and it can be said to be approaching a situation of digestion [of the foreign scholarship]."[62] Recalling Zhu Guangqian's course on "Literary psychology" at Tsinghua University at the time, Ji Xianlin remarks: "This course was extraordinary. It was my most satisfying course. It was incomparably better than all of those courses convened by professors from England,

[61]Ibid.

[62]Zhang Shilu: "Ping Zhu Guangqian 'Shi lun,'" in *Guowen yuekan*, Issue 58, July, 1947.

the US, France and Germany… He introduced the literary and artistic theories of all of the foreign countries, at times mentioning several old Chinese poems as examples, in a most natural manner, and we were able to comprehend him immediately. As far as those weird theories are concerned, he certainly was able to make sense of them and I was enthralled by what he said."[63] Speaking of Zhu Guangqian's academic research achievements, Luo Dagang also specifically compliments him saying, "He used a few examples from Chinese literature (mainly poetry) and art (mainly sketching) in order to elucidate the basic concepts of Western aesthetics."[64] It is obvious, then, that the practice of using new Western literary theories to interpret Chinese literary phenomena was widely accepted at the time. Its function was on the one hand to offer a completely new explanation for preexisting Chinese literary phenomena whilst on the other, making those otherwise "weird" Western theories more easily accepted and understood.

As Zhu Guangqian argued: "In the past, China has only had *shihua* [remarks on poetry] and not *shixue* [poetics]. Although Liu Yan and *Wenxin diaolong* [The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons] is meticulous in its arrangement; still, it does not restrict itself to poetry. Poetry is mostly jottings about random emotions, casually grasped in passing, snippets of words that are pertinent, succinct and cordial. These are its strong points. Its shortcomings, meanwhile, include disorder and frivolity, a lack of structure, at times tending to subjectivism. At times there is an excessive belief in tradition and a lack of scientific spirit and methodology."[65] He held that literary criticism was an extremely weak link in the development of Chinese literature. In his work, *Zhongguo wenxue zhi weikaipi de lingtu* [Unexplored Frontiers in Chinese Literature] written shortly after his arrival in England to study, he pointedly notes: "After being baptized by Western literature, the most important direction for change in our own literature is that of literary criticism. In this regard, we can make use of the more concrete and more thought-provoking elements that it offers." The aim of establishing a theoretical system for contemporary Chinese literature remained all along an important academic goal for Zhu Guangqian. And of course, such a theoretical system could not be built out of nothing, without any model whatsoever, and hence Western literary theories were an obvious point of reference. Zhu Guangqian chose Benedetto Croce's "image intuitionism," not only because it was tremendously popular in Europe at the time, but that it was in agreement with such Chinese theories as "the realm where 'both the object and the self are abandoned'" or "Calmly observe the world and be at peace, everything is beautiful and at peace with your fellow man." This type of bidirectional interpretation which introduced Croce's new theories whilst at the same time deepening and renewing the old understanding of the theory

[63]Ji Xianlin: "Ta shixianle shengmingde Jiazhi—huainian Zhu Guangqian xiansheng", *Wenhuibao*, 14th March, 1986.

[64]Luo Dagang: "Zhide zunjingde zhili laodongzhe—Zhu Guangqian xianshengde xuefeng", *Renminribao*, 26th May, 1986.

[65]"Shilun—kangzhanban xu," in *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, Vol. 3, p. 4.

of "the object and the self," did to a certain degree demonstrate the common "poetic heart" and "literary mind" of Chinese and Western literature, and through the process new theories were born.

In order to further elucidate the "object-self" relationship, Zhu Guangqian went on to introduce Ernst Bloch's "distance theory" and Theodor Lipps' "Empathy." Zhu Guangqian points out that distance causes the relationship between the self and an object to change from one of application to one of appreciation. Lipps' empathetic function transposes the emotion of the subject itself onto an external object, as if the external object experienced/possessed a similar emotion. Zhu Guangqian goes on to argue that "Not only is this empathetic function transposed from the self to the object, but at the same time the transposition occurs from the object to the self. Not only is the individual's disposition transferred onto the object, but the attitude of the object is absorbed by the self. The act of so-called aesthetic perception is in fact nothing more than the girding of one's senses, a bi-directional flow of appeal between the object and the self."[66] "For example, the admiration of an ancient pine … the image of an ancient pine conjures up mental associations of purity and brightness… [and] I unconsciously transposes this spirit of purity and brightness onto the body of the ancient pine, as if the pine originally possessed this characteristic. At the same time, I in turn am unconsciously influenced by this quality of the ancient pine and am uplifted, leading me to imitate its venerable and vigorous habit. So just as the ancient pine morphs into a human being, so too does a human morph into an ancient pine. All genuine experiences of aesthetic perception are like this. They all achieve a unity between the self and an object and in this realm of self-object unity this empathetic function is most readily activated."[67] Obviously on the basis of Lipps' theory of unidirectional empathy, Zhu Guangqian suggests a two-way exchange between the self and external objects and theories a mutual emotional interaction between the self and an external object. He accepts and elucidates Western literary theory from the intellectual foundation of the traditional Chinese concept of "the self-object unity" (*Tianren heyi* or Heaven and man are one). Whilst accepting and elucidating this concept, he still queries and revises the Western literary theories that he introduces.

2.4 Stand Firmly on One's Native Soil and Be Cognizant of the West—Zong Baihua

Zong Baihua was born in 1897 in Anqing in Anhui Province. His father was a progressive hydrologist while his mother had been born into the prominent Fang clan of Tongcheng. Zong Baihua grew up in a household where the new learning and traditional cultural sentiments intertwined and interacted. In 1914 Zong Baihua

[66]"Tan mei", Ibid. p. 22.

[67]Ibid.

studied in the Tongji Medical Workers' Academy in Shanghai which was run by a German national, studying German and medicine. Disinterested in studying medicine, Zong Baihua began to pay attention to the politics of the day, to questions of ethnicity and the state and to ponder various psychological phenomena. He spent most of his time delving into the philosophy of Zhuang Zi, Kant and Schopenhauer which provided for him an excellent foundation for his later contemplation of aesthetics and literary creation. He once recalled: "Zhuang Zi, Kant, Schopenhauer, Goethe, they all successively appeared on my spiritual horizon, and each of them left an indelible impression on my psychological personality. 'Look at the world through Schopenhauer's eyes, live in conformity with the spirit of Goethe' were my maxims at the time."[68] In 1917, he published his maiden work *Xiaopenghao zhexue dayi* [An Outline of Schopenhauer's Philosophy] in the Shanghai journal *Bingchen* [The Sun Dragon] in which he discussed Schopenhauer's philosophical theory of "The Will to Live," comparing it to the Buddhist "Pure Nirvana," Laozi's "Tranquility and non-action" and Jesus' concept of dedicating oneself to saving the world, concluding that "unbounded sympathy and compassion for all living things is the zenith of morality."[69]

In 1920, harboring an ardent desire to "visit Europe and do some research on European culture," the 23-year-old Zong Baihua embarked on a 5 year adventure as an international student. These 5 years coincided with a period when Germany was experiencing economic depression and cultural reassessment following World War I. Zong Baihua had already in a letter discussed this reassessment and the attendant rise in Sinitic studies. He writes: "After the war, Germany's academic community experienced a momentous reformation. Although books were expensive, an unending stream of new titles appeared and most prolific among them was a thorough elaboration and debate on the theory of relativity. Next to this was 'cultural' criticism. Two famous works were the rage at the time: one was titled *The Decline of the West* and the other, *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*. Both works boldly discussed the collapse of Western civilization and heaped praise on the perceived elegance of Eastern civilization. Currently China is experiencing a kind of movement that is tilted towards Western culture. 'East and West' are indeed 'flowing into one another.' In this month alone Germany published 45 works introducing Chinese culture. One work discusses Chinese art, another introduces famous Chinese paintings, another translates Chinese fiction (short stories), and yet another translates the poetry of famous Chinese authors (a selection of authors from the ancient airs to the Tang and Song period). Apart from this, Zhuang Zi and Lie Zi have both been translated and there are already five or six editions of Lao Zi in translation (and within the month another new edition will be published). The German people's interest in Chinese culture is genuinely quite deep."[70] The

[68]"Wo he shi," in *Zong Baihua quanji* (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), Vol. 2, p. 151.

[69]"Xiaopenghao zhexue dayi," in Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 8.

[70]"Zi De jian qi shu," in Ibid., Vol 1, p. 335.

German people looked to the East in their defeat and began to rise from adversity. This had a huge influence on Zong Baihua.

In 1925, after returning home, Zong Baihua successively taught at Southeast University, Central University and Nanjing University, after which he entered the Philosophy Department of Peking University, where he ran such courses as "Aesthetics", "Art," "Metaphysics," "The Philosophy of Shopenhauer," "The Philosophy of Nietzsche", "O. Spengler's 'The Decline of the West'", "The Philosophy of Kant", "Goethe" and "The Art of the Renaissance." Zong Baihua universally imbued these courses with the concepts of Sino-Western cultural comparison and promoted the spirit of Sino-Western cultural comparison. For example, in his "Metaphysics" course at Peking University, he discussed the comparison of Chinese and Western philosophy, including such topics as "Some Differences along the Path of Chinese and Western Philosophy," "Some Differences between Chinese and Western Law" and "The West's Conceptual World and China's Symbolic World."[71]

In the 1930s, Zong Baihua and Zhu Guangqian were both highly successful estheticians and later scholars often put them together or compared them. For example, Li Zehou, in his preface to *Aesthetic Ramblings* [*Meixue sanbu*] writes: "Mr Zhu (Guangqian)'s prose and thinking style is inductive/reasoned, whilst Mr Zong (Baihua)'s is emotive; Mr. Zhu leans toward literature while Mr. Zong prefers art; Mr. Zhu is contemporary, Western and scientific whilst Mr. Zong is more classical, Chinese, artistic. Mr. Zhu is a scholar and Mr. Zong is a poet."[72] This assessment is probably not far off the mark, but even more important is the fact that, as Zhu Guangqian immersed himself in the theories of Western philosophy, he linked it up with a considerable number of phenomena in Chinese literature, and these phenomena amply and consummately corroborated and explained the Western theories that he had espoused and which went on to form his own personal aesthetic view. Meanwhile, Zong Baihua embarked on a quest to develop a new Chinese cultural spirit and to seek a new path from an analysis of Western culture, philosophy and art, formulating in the process a new interpretation of Chinese culture and art. As the renowned poet from Taiwan notes: "Zong Baihua bases himself in a rich retrospective look at the classical oeuvre, on a penetrating exploration of the essence of European literature, accompanied by a reflective pursuit of the quintessence of Chinese culture, enabling him to, in crisply radiant reasoning, boldly hold an illuminating torch to [China's] traditional literature …"[73]

The fundamental principle in all of Zong Baihua's academic research was to revitalize China's spiritual culture. He notes: "Our current duty towards China's spiritual culture is on the one hand to preserve those mighty, majestic and indelible elements of China's ancient culture, develop and re-embellish them, whilst on the other, absorb the cream of the West's new culture, meld and fuse the two, and on

[71]"Xingshangxue", Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 598–645.

[72]Li Zehou, "*Meixue sanbu* xu", in *Meixue sanbu* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1981).

[73]Yang Mu, "*Meixue de sanbu* xu", in *Meixue de sanbu* (Taipei: Hongfan shudian, 1981).

the foundation of this East-West cultural congress, build an even more noble, more brilliant spiritual culture that constitutes an example to world culture of the future that avoids the current shortcomings and biases of Eastern and Western cultures." Zong Baihua's fundamental starting point was a new modern interpretation of China's exemplary traditional culture and enables it to form a vital and integral part of a new international cultural construct. This type of interpretation must be undertaken in conjunction with a fusion with the West.

Zong Baihua did not attempt to rebuild a new Chinese cultural spirit from the aspect of a comprehensive social system or an ideology, but from a rejuvenation of a culture, seeking to resolve the spiritual problems of a generation. He began with China's traditional culture, and especially its art and literature, and probed the unique characteristics of China's cultural spirit. He also looked at China's ancient national cultural spirit through the prism of a Western, modern cultural perspective, recognizing its distinctive features, casting aside its failings, and presenting it anew. In 1944, Zong Baihua specifically highlighted the necessity for a modern interpretation of China's traditional culture and art. He argued: "In history, every step forward has invariably been accompanied by a thorough reevaluation of the past. The genius of Li [Bo] and Du [Fu] derives from their learning from the past. Greece was idolized by the 16th century Renaissance movement while the 19th century romanticists hankered for the middle ages. The new factions of the 20th century in turn seek their inspiration from the simple chaos and naiveté of primitive art. China now stands at a turning point in history. New vistas will certainly unfold and a sympathetic re-appraisal of our old culture is even more imperative."[74] He believed that Chinese art was "the centerpiece of the history of Chinese culture and the aspect which has made the greatest international contribution." He virtually used his whole life's energy to develop a new interpretation of Chinese art, but remained clear-eyed about his quest at all times. As early as 1919, he noted in his work "China's Scholars—Engaging—Mediating" [Zhongguo de xuewenjia—goutong—tiaohe] that some negative phenomena could appear in the process of this cultural exposé, one of which was "On encountering a Western theory they invariably fist seek a statement amongst China's ancient scholarship which is able to encapsulate it. And once it is subsumed, it is assumed that the concept is already understood, already conceived of, and that there is no necessity to investigate it further. And if it were to be examined, it would only serve to elucidate the ancient scholarship and to confirm the ancient meaning and thus add still further to our admiration and amazement at the ancients and increase our reverence and our faith in them." A second negative phenomenon he warned was that we could not assume that "Where great scholars from all different eras and in all different places use similar expressions then they necessarily represent similar concepts," that each term has its own peculiar meaning and that just because "language or texts incidentally correspond" we cannot "say that the ancients had 'already foreseen this.'" And third, "there is a huge disparity between the environment and experiences of the ancients

[74]"Zhongguo yishu yijing zhi dansheng," *Zong Baihua quanji*, Vol. 2, p. 359.

and that which obtains today and academic methodologies differ even more" and that "the ancients' script has survived and their texts have been handed down through the generations, but their thinking and ideas have not." We cannot use our current understanding to replace "the concept that the ancients actually had in mind." In a word, "We must seek truth for truth's sake and we must not just study Eastern and Western theories with a view to establishing connections and reconciliation."[75] This quite pointedly warns of the possibility of losing one's way in the process of exposition and research.

In researching Chinese culture, Zong Baihua spoke most about the integration of poetry, painting and music, and their significance to life. This cannot be separated from the influence of Goethe and romance literature, and especially Henri-Louis Bergsen's *Lebens Philosophie* or *Philosophy of Life*. In his youth he declared: "Bergsen's creation theory contains a powerful spirit of engagement with the world, a will to create, to evolve. It is eminently suitable to serve as the world view of our young Chinese students." In Zong Baihua's eyes, the crux of Bergsen's creation theory was intuition, which he argued "incorporates the rational elements of intelligence and at the same time transcends the limits of intelligence [to facilitate] spiritual pursuits." Intuition was a uniquely human characteristic, the ability to "empathize" which takes "life as a whole as its object." Philosophical knowledge was to "intuitively transform native ability into intelligent concepts," and not only were the genius creations of poets, but also scientists, largely indebted to this. The thought and inventions of genius mostly stems from this, "perhaps borrowing theories or essays, sketches or artistic works, revealing the truth about the universe to the masses and promoting the evolution of the intelligence and morality of humankind." Zong Baihua points out that Bergsen focuses on intuition in order to teach people to be aware of our personally experienced feelings. These feelings which are being 'continually generated' are the very foundation of his philosophy.[76] When he first introduced Bergsen, Zong Baihua had already elevated the position of intuition in China's traditional culture from Zhuangzi's *zhigan* [intuition] to images of pictures that are often used in Buddhist books.

He believed that Chinese poetry, painting, and music all forged this type of "rhythm of life that is void yet pregnant with potential" by means of the artist's intuition. For example "Du Fu praised his own poetry, saying: 'At the conclusion, I am able to rise to a state of euphoric obscurity.' Zhuangzi also noted approvingly that 'the ancients are abstruse'; the late Ming thinker Fang Mizhi (i.e., Fang Yizhi) gave himself the epithet *wudaoren* [man devoid of morals], his landscape paintings were steeped in a light mist and he frequently used a blunt brush and avoided direct representation. He often publicly declared to his audience: 'What do you think this is? This is in fact the 'void' of a man devoid of morals!'"[77] This "euphoric obscurity," this "void" is indeed the most profound hidden reality of Chinese art.

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[75]"Zhongguo de xuewenjia—goutong—tiaohe", Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 114.

[76]"Tan Bogesen 'Chuanghua lun' zagan," Ibid., p. 78.

[77]"Zhongguo shihuazhong suo biaoxiande kongjian yishi," *Zong Baihua quanji*, Vol. 2, p. 442.

Zong Baihua writes: "The art of the Greek period introduced such important questions as 'form,' 'harmony,' 'the imitation of nature' and 'unity in diversity' into Western aesthetics, ideas that have endured to the present. Since the Renaissance, modern art has further posed such questions as 'lifelike expression' and 'emotive expression.' Meanwhile, the heart of Chinese art, sketching, has given Chinese aesthetics 'vivid style,' 'pen and ink,' 'truth and falsehood/void and substance' and 'Yin-Yang, light and dark.'"[78] To Zong Baihua's mind, if we are to say that Greek art is "a defined and tranquil" space, and that modern European art is "a vast and unfathomable space," then Chinese art alone displays a "profound and silent melding and unity with unbounded nature and the infinite heavens." What is more, in Chinese sketching, *kongbai* [blank space] is not the same as *kongxu* [emptiness] but is rather filled with life and activity, or in Zong Baihua's words, it is a fact that "humans and space-time dissolve into one, a scene of inexhaustibly vivid style."[79] The ancient Chinese theories and views discussed above were imbued with new contemporary meaning precisely through the analogy and contrast afforded by Western theories whereby the distinguishing features of those ancient theories and views were highlighted.

Furthermore, beginning from the Chinese theory of art, Zong Baihua quotes the words of the great painter Shi Tao in saying: "Mountains and rivers ask me to speak on their behalf … the mountains and streams encounter the muse and leave their traces." This was originally the traditional Chinese argument, but Zong Baihua linked it to the artistic domain debated within Western aesthetics and pointed out that the Western "realm of utility is concerned with profit, the ethical realm is concerned with love, the scholarly realm is concerned with truth and the religious realm is concerned with God" and that the "artistic realm" which was "focused on beauty" was situated between the academic and religious realms and that it takes as its object concrete cosmic life and appreciates and toys with its hue, its order, its rhythm and its harmony in order to peek into the innermost reflections of one's soul, presenting reality as if it were a void, and creating images as if they were symbols, rendering physical and corporeal mankind's loftiest spirit. This is what is referred to as the 'artistic realm,'" as the Swiss thinker Anuel put it: "a natural landscape is a soul's domain."[80] In other words, mankind's loftiest spirit must be made physical and corporeal and fashioned into a natural landscape. This is vastly different from China's "unity of the object and the self" or even its "abandonment of the object and the self." *Shi Wei* 诗纬 states: "The poet's heart encompasses both heaven and earth" while Dong Qichang states: "Poetry inhabits the mountains and streams and the mountains and streams epitomize poetry" and Shi Tao says: "The mountains and streams encounter the muse and leave their traces." Zong Baihua considers the Western aesthetic "concretization and corpo-realization" of the spirit, and

[78]"Jieshao liangben guanyu Zhongguo huaxuede shu bing lun Zhongguode huihua," Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 43.

[79]Ibid., pp. 44, 45.

[80]"Zhongguo yishu yijing zhi dansheng," Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 361.

reinterpreted China's theory of painting, pointing out that all artists "use their spirit to illuminate all things and speak on behalf of the mountains and streams. All that he displays is a confluence of subjective life sentiments and objective natural phenomena, creating a lively, vivacious and exquisite, deep and profound site for the soul; this soul realm is precisely the 'creative concept' which makes art what it is." If it were not for his reflection on Western art, Zong Baihua could hardly have discussed this "concept" through the medium of the Western concept of "intuition." This then bestowed on traditional thought a kind of contemporary significance. Thus what Zong Baihua discussed was no longer an extension of China's classical aesthetics, but it constituted an historical transformation of China's classic aesthetics into a modern aesthetics and resulted in the introduction of modern meaning into the classical aesthetics. In other words, it was a kind of modern interpretation.

In this constant comparison of the similarities and differences with Western culture, Zong Baihua offered a new explanation for the spirit of China's culture in years gone by and he raised this cultural spirit to new heights. For example, he saw in Goethe Western culture's spirit of unremitting struggle for advancement and he confirmed that Goethe's art brought to the West a kind of new life sentiment which "affirmed the value of life itself" and demonstrated its vivaciousness; and because this life was one of endless searching and unremitting struggle, careering into fantasy, it led to the tragedy of the restless spirit. In analyzing the "beauty of the common man," whilst expounding the principle that "The so-called 'life sentiments' and 'cosmic consciousness' of modern philosophy begins to sprout in the transcendent breast of the common man"[81] in the spirit of Goethe, the charm, reach, simplicity and profundity of the everyman that Zong Baihua stressed offered people a new level of understanding of Goethe's "tragedy of the restless spirit." Zong Baihua also adopted Nietzsche's "theory of the two realms of life." These two realms were symbolized by the two figures of Dionysus (or Bacchus), the god of wine, and Apollo, the sun god. The Dionysian realm involved infatuation and symbolized the exuberance of life while the Apollonian realm involved serenity and symbolized the moderation/ordering of life. The beauty of the everyman incorporated the dual propositions of fulfillment and vacuousness. "Fulfillment" signified life grasping the vigor and grandeur of the universe, while vacuousness hinted at a void waiting to be filled, an emptiness encompassing a plethora of spheres. This is also a fusion of Nietzsche's "state of intoxication" and "dream state." "Fulfillment" or "vacuity," dreams and intoxication—not only was the cadence of the alternate appearance of the two states of being clearly revealed in the beauty of the common man, but it was also demonstrated in the creative concepts of other Chinese artists. The great Yuan painter Huang Zijiu loved to "observe the breaking waves of the raging torrent as it enters the sea," and whilst the tempest rages, the water is strangely sad and surprisingly unmoved. The Song painter Mi Youren was fascinated by "a monk tip-toeing through a silent room, oblivious of any worries, flowing with the empty void." Zong Baihua declared: "Huang Zijiu made the

[81]Ibid., p. 276.

passion of Dionysius deeply penetrate the motion of the universe and Mi Youren imbued the grandeur of the world with Apollonian serenity to represent the two loftiest spiritual forms of artistic life."[82] Obviously, if it were not for Nietzsche's "theory of the two realms of life," then it would be impossible to make such a modern transformation of the subject of the "fulfillment" and "vacuity" subsumed in both the concept of the common man and in Chinese aesthetics. Similarly, as Nietzsche's "theory of the two realms of life" found expression in the exposition of Chinese art, it was also afforded the opportunity of an enriched interpretation and in the end the thought of modern Western individuals penetrated the heart of Chinese culture whilst at the same time the spirit of Chinese culture became oriented in a new modern context and this multilayered and multifaceted encounter between the ancient and modern, between China and the West achieved a bidirectional exposition.

[82]"Zhongguo yijing zhi dansheng," Ibid., p. 364.

Chapter 3
A New Beginning for China's Comparative Literature: Qian Zhongshu's *Limited Views*—The Establishment of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association

The renaissance of comparative literature in China was heralded by the publication of Qian Zhongshu's seminal work *Guan zhui pian* or *Limited Views*. *Limited Views* in 1979 which richly and comprehensively realized the unique nature of comparative literature as a "peripheral discipline," is "most expansive and open," most "incapable of reduction to a specific system of scientific or literary research."

The four volumes of *Limited Views* were written during the 10 years of chaos that was the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). The work comprises some 781 sections and quotes from over 1000 works from more than 800 foreign authors, arranged around ten classical works like *Zhouyi zhengyi* [The True Meaning of *The Book of Changes*] and *Maoshi zhengyi* [The True Meaning of *The Book of Songs*]. It draws together the works of over 3000 Chinese and foreign writers in an attempt to expound the author's personal insights on reading.

The basic premise of the work as a whole is a firm belief that "All of the objects of study in the humanities are interconnected, mutually permeated, and not only internationally, but they also straddle epochs and interconnect different branches of science."[1] Qian Zhongshu never chose to impose any so-called man-made overarching "system" on his work or allow the objective world to be shackled by such a system. He argued that it was meaningless to expend enormous amounts of energy in establishing a massive system. Throughout history, it is a simple fact that "invariably what remain of value of the whole theoretical system are merely a few random thoughts."[2] But this is not to deny the relevance of rules or patterns. On the contrary, he believed that "when art is an art, it is imbued with logic throughout, whereas where art is a task, then it breaks up into a million pieces,"[3] and that the quest is to uncover those universal rules which are "hidden in the minutiae and

[1] "Shi keyi yuan" [Our Sweetest Songs], *Wenxue pinglun*, Issue 1, 1981.
[2] *Jiuwen sipian*, pp. 26–27.
[3] *Guan zhui pian*, p. 1279.

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when released they transmogrify into sweeping landscapes"[4] are some of the most genuinely rewarding experiences in scholarship.

The greatest contribution of *Limited Views* is in its teasing out of the important common rules of literature from a comprehensive survey of both the ancient and the modern, from observing the world and from "every minute detail". In other words, it lies in breaking through all manner of academic boundaries (that of time, place, discipline, and language) and connecting up literature as a whole in order to seek a common "poetic heart" and "literary mind." Qian Zhongshu believed that this type of common "poetic heart" and "literary mind" existed objectively, or as he puts it, "the similarity between minds is based on the nature of reason, and the nature of reason is based on the law of things, which corresponds to the inherent nature of things."[5] Whilst exploring these common principles, Qian Zhongshu always began with actual literary phenomena and never resorted to simple deduction or inference. He stressed: "I am interested in concrete literary appreciation and appraisal."[6] Appreciation and appraisal is the exact opposite of the current dangerous tendency in the world's comparative literature circles to "not pass judgment" but simply to make purely theoretical deductions. In the process of literary appreciation and appraisal, Qian Zhongshu held that the most fundamental challenge was to ground oneself firmly in the "actual text" of a work, and if you "completely abandon what is contained within a poem and seek for things external to it, then it is like ignoring things nearby whilst hoping to obtain something by reaching up to heaven or down to the netherworld—it can be used in historiography or sermonizing but it should not be used in artistic appreciation."[7] In his view, if we are to "discuss art," and then we must start from the actual piece of work itself. If we were to simply use some novel terminology to deliberately mystify the work then this would be completely without merit. He had offered a few examples of several contemporary French and American critics who had misused structuralism in this way, criticizing the theories of such people as Julia Kristeva.[8] But this in no way means that Qian Zhongshu did not value theories. In fact the opposite is true. He was invariably at pains to cast aside the interference of trivial side issues and strove to grasp the general thrust of an object. He advocated "simplifying a multitude of loose ends into two or three major incidents" in order to be able to "take a broader view" because there must be "no random obstacles to interfere with the line of sight."[9] Only then one is able to discover the real essence of an object. Thus, he argued that the basic flaw in *pingdian* or Chinese style commentary was the common practice of "paying attention to trivial things while neglecting the source of artistic production."[10] So he

[4]Ibid., p. 296.

[5]Ibid., p. 50.

[6]*Jiuwen sipian*, p. 7.

[7]*Guan zhui pian*, p. 110.

[8]"Qian Zhongshu tan bijiao wenxue he 'wenxue bijiao'", *Dushu*, Issue 10, 1981.

[9]*Jiuwen sipian*, p. 3.

[10]*Guan zhui pian*, p. 1215.

personally often strove to probe the "source of artistic creation" and was extremely alert to a number of new theories which were emerging abroad. It was in the context of just such an intellectual ferment that the Chinese Comparative Literature Association was established in 1985.

On October 29, 1985, an international conference, constituting the inaugural meeting of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association was held at Shenzhen University. The Association was convened jointly by 35 comprehensive state universities and research organizations and the conference was attended by the President of the International Comparative Literature Association, Douwe Wessel Fokkema, Professor Frederic Jameson from Duke University, Professor Yip Wailim from the University of California, Professor Earl Miner from Princeton, and a number of distinguished scholars from Hong Kong and Taiwan of China, including Ackbar Abbas, Antony Tatlow, Heh-hsiang Yuan, Tak-wai Wong, and Wai-leung Wong. After a month of study at a national workshop on Chinese comparative literature convened jointly by Peking University and Shenzhen University, all attendees also participated in the conference.

This conference was a chance to assess the current state of play of comparative literary research in China and at the same time afforded an opportunity for Chinese and international scholars to exchange research experiences. This stock take and dialog boded well for a new expansion of China's comparative literary research.

Of the 121 papers presented at the conference, naturally the first issue deserving commendation were the achievements in comparative aesthetics and comparative literature. In recent years, China has undertaken a program of broad comparative research into Marxist aesthetics and literary studies across the globe. This comparative research was born of necessity. In the past, ever since the 1930s, we have relied in part on materials processed by Soviet theoreticians (and to a lesser extent, Japanese). A significant number of relevant and important works by Marx have been monopolized or buried and, when we add to this the sharp and complicated situation with regards to class struggle, it was not conducive to be considered and objective research. It could be said that we had not yet established our own system of Chinese Marxist aesthetics and here we were at the end of the 1970s ill-prepared to face the diverse and complicated world of Marxist aesthetics. As someone pointed out at the conference: "We are truly facing the world, facing a time of historical development in contemporary Marxism and its current state. We are faced with a wide range of individuals, events and questions that are relevant to Marxist theory that has never been thoroughly researched before." Speaking of the realms of aesthetics and literature, myriads of different points of view and theories existed which, to a dogmatist, was disastrous and dangerous, but to truly courageous Marxists, this was an opportunity for development, to enrich oneself, and in the process of comparison and differentiation, it offered the perfect opportunity to establish a system of Chinese Marxist aesthetics. In fact, many of China's academics were already treading this pathway, such as Li Zehou's *A Critique of Critical Philosophy—A Review of Kant's Philosophy* (Pipan zhexuede pipan—Kangde zhexue shuping); Liu Mingjiu's research on Jean-Paul Sartre and Zhu Guangqian's research on Giovanni Battista Vico; Ru Xin's *Sequel to A Collection of Essays on the History of Western Aesthetics*

(Xifang meixueshi luncong xubian) and Jiang Kongyang's *Classical German Aesthetics* (Deguo gudian meixue) all made highly fruitful efforts in this regard. In some of the papers at the conference it was also suggested that if we are to progress the establishment of Marxist comparative aesthetics then we must resolutely reject Andrei Aleksandrovich Zhdanov-style Soviet dogmatism, delve deeply into a study of the history of Marxist aesthetics, look at questions from the elevated viewpoint of contemporary international Marxism and face the new international challenge to Marxist aesthetics.

The progress in China's comparative aesthetics and literature can also be seen in a number of questions that have already been posed where detailed analysis has been carried out and new conclusions have been reached. For example, some have begun from the following three aspects, namely: an understanding of the special characteristics of the intrinsic nature of art (*biaoxian* [expression] and *zaixian* [re-presentation]), an understanding of the special characteristics of the psychology of artistic creation (*mikuang* [catharsis] and *xujing* [empty quietude]), an understanding of art and the effect of esthetic appreciation (*jinghua* [purification] and *wuhua* [corpo-realization/reification]), and have attempted a personal explanation for the different characteristics of Chinese and Western poetics, pointing out that Western poetics operates on the principle of seeking "expression" through "re-creation", whereas Chinese poetics uses "expression" to attain "re-creation," the Western "catharsis" focuses on the subject's "radiation/realization" and "creativity" which is capable of relating to "expression," China's theory of *xujingshuo* [empty quietude], meanwhile, stresses an object's "clarity" and "internal consistency," and is congruent with "re-creation," and lastly, the West's theory of "purification" stresses the unity of beauty and virtue, using morality to "moderate" natural emotions and thus ensure that man's development syncs with society's development; China's "corpo-realization/reification" thesis stresses the unity of beauty and truth and the realm of freedom represented by the unification of the object and the self, leading to the return of man to his natural self. The speakers lastly pointed out how "a sense of history" triumphs in Western poetics whilst in Chinese poetics "the capacity to appreciate beauty" triumphs. Founded on the unity of history and aesthetics, Chinese and Western poetics are currently borrowing from one another. Apart from this, there were several conference papers that probed the same question from different angles, thus adding another layer of depth to the discussion.

The second achievement of the Shenzhen conference was the formation of a relative consensus on the definition, scope, and methodology etc. of comparative literature, questions that had seen a division of opinion over many years. For example, should comparative literature be simply defined as using the method of comparison to study literature? In the past opinion was widely divided on this question. The current consensus on the question is: "comparative" refers to the methodology commonly used in the study of literary theory, literary criticism and literary history. It cannot be used to define an academic discipline. Moreover, apart from using the methodology of comparison, comparative literature also extensively utilizes such various methodologies as induction, deduction, description, exposition, synthesis and rebuttal, to the extent that at times it does not even employ the

methodology of comparison at all. At the conference, the attendees turned to discussing the fact that it was equally inappropriate to use the political concept of the state to define the scope of comparative literature, and even more so when applied to such a large multi-ethnic state like China. Some suggested that in China two systems of comparative research should be established: a national comparative research regime which encompassed the literature of the Han ethnicity, comparing it to that of the other ethnicities, or a comparison of the literature of professional literatus with that of popular literature and a comparison between the literature of different regions; or a comparative research regime which focuses on the national and the international which would encompass a comparative study of Chinese literature with that of all other international literatures. Naturally, there were a significant number of attendees who disagreed with this idea, but all were in agreement that comparative literature itself was an open architecture and that research could be initiated and gradually an academic regime would be formed.

On the question of methodology, the conference suggested that the study of influence, the study of equality/equity and the study of exposition/elucidation should form the three fundamental methodologies of comparative literary research, a view which won the approval of the attendees. Some cited the opinion of scholars from Taiwan, arguing: "Chinese scholars have always used" the *chanfafa* or elucidation method, i.e., "to use the systematic literary criticism of the West to elucidate Chinese literature and Chinese literary theory" . In fact, elucidatory research should be a two-way street. Not only should we use the foreign in China, but we can also use the Chinese abroad: if Chinese literary theory is used to elucidate foreign literature and foreign literary theory, then new angles will similarly be discovered. The reason why this bi-directional elucidation is possible because literature itself shares common rules of development and mutual elucidation is eminently capable of establishing a mutual "literary mind," but this is only restricted to those areas where the two types of models may overlap and not permit one type of model to be imposed on another type of literature. Some comrades at the conference stressed that "influence research" could easily "bind oneself hand and foot," and that it has its own "insurmountable flaws," but many other attendees disagreed with this view. They argued that any methodology inherently came with its own limitations and that the question was whether or not it was possible to empower the particular strengths of each. At present, research on influence continues to carry its extremely important meaning in China. This meaning is not only to "clarify" the mutual relationship between Chinese and foreign literatures, but the important point is that we are currently situated in a juncture of increasing synthesis, where the mutual permeation and confluence of cultures is an increasingly unavoidable inevitability. Our own May Fourth period virtually subsumed all of the cultures from Euro–America, Russia–Soviet, India, Persia, and Japan and in a very brief period of time, and suddenly, these myriads of cultures with their different systems flooded in and clashed with a venerable, uniform, and broad culture, a phenomenon that perhaps was unique in the history of culture. Especially from the point of view of the newly "accepted" theories, following "practically integrated" research into the reception process of how Chinese culture filtered, absorbed, embraced and

transformed these innumerable foreign cultures, it is undeniable that the process held inestimable value in studying the fusion of Chinese culture or studying our own unique cultural characteristics, where the process of "acceptance" acted as a mirror on our own culture.

Finally, we should mention that several weak links in our own comparative literature research was further strengthened during this conference. Comparative research between the various ethnic literatures of the East was especially highlighted. On this occasion the first thing to be noted of the papers on Eastern comparative literature was their tremendous range, covering the mutual influence in terms of literature between China and other states in the region, including Japan, Vietnam, India and Korea. The second thing was the sheer volume of the scholarship. The combined number of papers covering Eastern comparative literature and papers on our own ethnic minority literature reached 22, which represented some 20 % of the total papers at the conference. This unprecedented proportion speaks to the flourishing nature of Eastern research. The third point to note is that the conference broke new ground with such papers as "Looking at the cultural exchange between Persia and the Uighurs from 'Khosrov and Shirin' to 'Farhad and Shirin'" or "An initial exploration of the relationship between Persian and Arabic literature," all of which represented pieces of innovative research which had never been previously presented.

It can be said that this conference saw the first large-scale debut of ethnic minority literatures on the podium of comparative literature. Ever since the establishment of the "Foreign and Comparative Literature Research Association" by the National Ethnic Minorities Colleges, centered on the Zhongnan Ethnic Minorities Institute, ethnic minorities literature experts have made a great effort and this conference demonstrated the results of this effort. As some of the conference papers pointed out: "Our ethnic minorities live on the frontiers and they physically abut foreign lands—like Xinjiang and the Soviet Union, Tibet and India, Guangxi and Vietnam, Inner Mongolia and the Mongolian People's Republic or Jilin and Liaoning with Korea." Not only does the development of comparative research of ethnic minority literature have an especially important meaning for literature itself, but also for the development of the friendship between the various minority peoples. Apart from the paper entitled "Hanzu, Naxizu long gushi de bijiao yanjiu" [Comparative Research into the Dragon Mythology of the Han and the Naxi], all papers in this conference were the results of comparative research into ethnic minority or foreign literature, such as "'Luomiou yu Zhuliye' he 'Ebing yu Sangluo'" [*Romeo and Juliet* and *Ebing and Sang Luo*], "'Huoling dazhan' yu 'Yiliyate'" [*The Great Battle of Huoling* and *The Iliad*], "'Gesaer wang' yu 'Hema shishi'" [*King Gesar* and *The Epic Poetry of Homer*], or "Zhongguo shaoshuminzu yingxiong shenhua yu waiguo yingxiong shenhua de bijiao tantao" [A comparative investigation of the heroic myths of China's ethnic minorities and those of foreign countries]. Comparative ethnic minority literature is a fertile virgin preserve whose cultivation has only just begun and which is unavoidably stalled at the basic research stage of comparing "X and Y," but we have reason to expect that it promises a glorious future.

It is especially worth mentioning the rapid development of "Interdisciplinary" research. The relationship between literature and culture was afforded special attention, probably because as President Fokkema of the International Comparative Literature Research Association mentioned, poetry and fiction is being challenged by the cinema and television, and "culture" carries a special significance in our "post-imperialist" era. On this topic, some contributors described the break-up of the Western cultural paradigm and discussed the resurgence of the Greek spirit and Hegelian conclusion in cultural concepts since Nietzsche. They argued: "Culture became the object of poetics in a completely new sense (and thus was 'literature-ised') and entered, with the poetic pattern, the central reaches of general cultural concepts, forming as it did new cultural concepts (and thus becoming 'philosophised'); it was a process of mutual osmosis and mutual illumination." Culture is no longer the "theoretical system" as the old view would have it, but that it "must be understood as a type of vibrant part of existence activity itself, full of creative energy and therefore it reveals a type of "poetic style." This type of culture further describes poetry as a type of "meaning mode" which embodies "the essence of culture." The papers explored three types of models, namely "The Hemingway model of transformation from a traditional creative consciousness to a contemporary creative consciousness, the Wittgenstein model of transformation from a traditional cultural outlook to a contemporary cultural outlook and the Heidegger model of transformation from cultural poetics to poetic culture." The cross-disciplinary study of poetry and painting was also mentioned, such as in comparative discussions of poetry and art, the arguments in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoon* were imputed with a type of supra-cultural meaning. In fact Chinese and Western comparative artistic and poetic theories are based on different artistic practice and have been developed against different cultural backgrounds. For example, China's ancient comparative artistic and poetic theories were based on ancient lyric poetry and the landscape painting of the literati, which was different to the historical ballads and narrative painting which were the focus of Lessing's attention. Chinese art historically emphasized the mutual rapport between man and nature which differed from the Western artistic concept which placed man at the center. Chinese painting utilized the ink wash and its framed space carried a certain virtual character, surmounting the common creative level to permit the incorporation of many nonrepresentational elements. This set it even further apart from the stress on "emulation/imitation" and the dependency on color and line in traditional Western oil painting. Thus the conference argued that Lessing emphasized the differences in the analysis of the mediums of poetry and painting whereas Chinese literary-poetic theory stressed the convergence in the expressive function of poetry and art.

Apart from this, papers which delved into a comparison of Chinese and Western mythology also achieved quite a number of creative breakthroughs, including some which have already been accepted as falling within the boundaries of general literary research. One example is the research on archery heroes or research on "the anthropomorphism of mythological ideals". Amongst those papers which were judged to belong to general literary research, some discussed the different manifestations of the image of the strongman Samson in the Bible's *Old Testament*,

Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and Mao Dun's *Cansun de Fuchou* [Samson Agonistes] and discussions on the role of the "wolf" as a symbol in different literary regimes throughout the world.

Some 14 overseas scholars were amongst the attendees and they also presented papers and participated in the discussion. For example, one French scholar's specialist report introduced how reception theory was employed in comparative literature research, explaining the basic thrust of reception theory and highlighting the questions that need to be kept in mind when using "reception" theory to research comparative literature. The scholar pointed to the differences between the "reception" by actual readers of a certain foreign work and that of a native work, that they often imposed their native literary model on the foreign work, selecting from it, discarding parts of it and transforming it. Issues like this are indeed the object of comparative literary research. In addition, scholars of comparative literature find it extremely difficult to accept the "pure phenomenological concept" that "a work can only exist in so far as it is read" because this could narrowly view "reception" as an independent individual act of the reader whilst comparative literature strives to incorporate literature into the mainstream of human activity and comprehensively consider the actual conditions whereby the reader or the public at large receive a work of literature. Reception theory also assists scholars of comparative literature to understand more fully the "receptors" of different countries themselves. Gillet's work *Le Paradis Perdu dans la littérature française de Voltaire à Chateaubriand*, for example, uses the French reception of *Paradise Lost* as a mirror to illuminate the hidden fear of the French in the expression of optimism and progress. "Reception" theory has made possible the creation of a new, reader-focused literary history, a history which is constructed from the three elements of creation, tradition and adoption. For example, French surrealism's "rediscovery of authors (and traditions) that had not previously been noted and its simultaneous expansion into (adoption of) Chinese literature." The task of comparative literature is to research this kind of "creation—reception of tradition—adoption" process across different countries and to probe the mutual relationship between them. "Reception" theory's concepts of "never think you have exhausted all the possibilities of a given work" and "never think that you have exhausted all the possibilities of literature" are of extremely important significance to comparative literature research. The report concluded with the suggestion that "Might China not consider expanding research into the foreign literature which has for the past 80 years of this century been translated and introduced into the country and how it has been accepted in China?" Not only should we consider "such-and-such an author in such-and-such a country," but we should also pay attention to such questions as "the literature of country X in country Y" in a specific period because this kind of "contemporaneous" discussion within a given "periodic" framework often assists us to understand such interesting phenomena as the "shifting horizons," "acceptance screens" and "conditions of acceptance" as well as changes and "historical turns." The American scholars were at pains to demonstrate the relationship between "acceptance" and "influence," vigorously pointing out the fact that Western literary research invariably begins with some type of assumption or inference, and those literary critics who

"deliberately obfuscate" especially, regularly rely on hypotheses which have undergone perpetual change over the past few hundred years while in Chinese poetics, even more scholars investigate how poets are moved in terms of emotion or morality and how they express this arousal through text—and how this expression in turn influences the reader. A German scholar presented a paper on general literary research which investigated a range of cultural, philosophical, social, psychological and literary questions that were raised in works of world literature that chose illness or disease as their main theme or subject matter. The paper pointed out that from this research "we are able not only to obtain an interpretation of illness and disease but are also able to appreciate the quintessence of the different life views and the meaning and aim of the existence and survival of the healthy population." Furthermore, because "illness and disease is first of all described in objective terms by medicine as part of the natural sciences, literature here is not only a medium for transmission and elevation, but has already been profoundly recognized as an important element of truth." "Thus art and medicine mutually support each other and form a frontier science, a science of 'cross-cultural' 'man'." During the scholarly exchange, the foreign scholars exchanged views with their Chinese counterparts, for example in the discussion on research on Lu Xun some Chinese scholars argued that some papers generalized about Lu Xun's early, initial and late periods by employing romanticism, modernism and realism, and suffered from over-simplification and thus were not particularly able to explain the complex reality of Lu Xun's thought and his works. Some foreign scholars' suggestion that we study Lu Xun's thought through the "reception" of his "Mara poets" as well as his *Kumen de xiangzheng* [Symbol of Depression][11] and *Yishu lun* [On Art] offered a meaningful theoretical hypothesis. They went on to suggest that we should comprehensively investigate Lu Xun's extremely complicated individuality from beginning to end. The foreign scholars especially pointed out that Lu Xun in his later years never used the vernacular language to write poetry and that it is very difficult to term his classical style poems realist. Thus it is worth considering how Lu Xun's early romantic temperament gradually developed or dissipated. Additionally, in the discussion over the comparative research between European realism and China's realism of the May Fourth period, the foreign scholars agreed that Europe's realism was not as compelling as the strong sense of historical destiny evinced by China's realism, but still they raised the example of Tolstoy and opposed restricting the "spirit of national introspection" to Chinese realism. These research results and scholarly opinions offered new methodologies, new perspectives and new points for reflection that are worth our consideration.

This conference not only demonstrated the depth and breadth of comparative literary research in this country, but it also offered for review a youthful comparative literature research battle formation, full of rational intellectual rigor and

[11]See the work on literary theory by the Japanese scholar Kuriyagawa Hakuson (1880–1923).

spirited and acute intellectual ability (more than 70 % of the attendees and paper presenters were young to middle-aged). With this as its hallmark, China's comparative literature research has embarked on a new beginning from which we can already discern a glorious and limitless future of expansion.

Chapter 4
Enter the International Cultural Dialogue Pro-Actively with Uniqueness and Originality

Speech at the 3rd Annual meeting of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association and International Conference, 1990

Dialogue naturally includes economics, politics, military affairs and more, and culture is an especially important and integral part of it. Culture itself is a type of strength or power which is used to delineate and identify all phenomena in our surroundings, such as good or evil, beauty or ugliness, precious or commonplace, worthy of respect or contempt, order or chaos, sagely or fanatical, normal or abnormal, healthy or diseased, etc. Any member of a given cultural matrix when considering these phenomena will reach basic agreement and form a cultural force, a force whose development is completed by the complementary processes of *renting* or endorsement and *liyi* or estrangement. "Endorsement" is demonstrated by a basic congruence with the cultural agent, such as our tradition of "Elaborating on the classics instead of creating anything by oneself" and "To search the original intent of the classics", the function of which is to consolidate and defend the various limits of the cultural power already established, leading to an aggregation and stabilization of a certain culture whilst at the same time certain alien elements are, for this reason, unavoidably excluded and repressed. "Estrangement", meanwhile, is demonstrated by criticism and abandonment, by timely destruction, expansion, and transformation of boundaries, by admission of previously rejected elements, and liberating repressed energy. Exposition on the basis of estrangement is a type of reconfiguration of the traditional culture on the basis of a harmonized field of view such as the "interfere with tradition and chaos will ensue" or "deliberate misreading of the classics to meet my needs" which frequently occurred during the development of our own culture. The mutual execution of the two functions of endorsement and estrangement facilitates the development of cultural power.

Contact between different cultures in truth is a type of test of strength and results in the vanquishment of the weaker cultural force by the stronger. Tzvetan Todorov, in his work *The Conquest of America* relies on a wealth of data to show that the Spanish vanquishment of the Indians was not primarily due to their military or economic might, but because of the limitations of the weak cultural power of the Indians themselves. Todorov argues that "A superior ability to understand is the

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optimum strategy for establishing one's authority". Because the Indians clung to an old culture, they were unable to recognize the capacity of others and they forfeited the opportunity that Japan, for instance, had grasped, of rejuvenating their own culture, to the extent that despite occupying an extensive and fertile terrain and a long winding coast, they were unable to escape their historical destiny of ethnic decline. On the other hand, there are some people who, because they lack an ethnic cultural cohesion, and because they are unable to interpret a new their traditional culture in a period of historical transformation, they succumb to "total foreignization" and invasion by the stronger cultural force, alienating and severing their own ethnic cultural traditions. In some cases, people who have been colonized and have had their culture replaced by the colonizing nation's culture and become an historical ruin are a prime example of this.

Apart from economic and political rivalry, the world of the 1990s will witness a fierce battle in terms of cultural power. In this battle, the preexisting distribution of cultural strength and the cultural ecology will both undergo tremendous change. This will be the era of cultural transformation that people have been anticipating. The cultural force field is backed by economic, political, social, and military considerations which places the culture of the Third World at a comparative disadvantage to that of the developing world from the very outset. Over the past several hundred years, the culture of the developed world has always been at the center and that of the Third World relegated to the periphery. The former has been active and the latter passive; the former has forged ahead and the latter retreated; the former has formulated theory and the latter applied that theory; the former has occupied a superior position, believing itself to be the center of world culture, able to expropriate the culture of others at will and make it "my property", whilst the latter is forced into a position of retreat and defence, fearing annexation and striving for self-preservation, rejecting the external culture and ultimately becoming incapable of admitting even the more positive feature of the other culture and thus forfeiting the opportunity for rejuvenation and development. Meanwhile, the developed countries utilize the economic and social prosperity that they have plundered from the Third World over many hundreds of years to consummately develop their own culture, expand their own cultural strength, and in the fields of philosophy, social science and the humanities, comprehensively achieve a state of total systemic maturity and go on to exploit this formidable cultural dominance and lord it over the Third World, placing that World in an inescapable catch 22 situation, namely: either quickly master the theories, concepts, and language that the developed world has evolved over several hundreds of years, accept their framework and utilize their models; or alternatively remain forever on the periphery, close yourself to international discourse and preserve your national essence. China's several decades of cyclical struggle between "total Westernization" and "indigenous culture" are an historical recreation of this catch 22 situation.

Since the Second World War, the world has entered the information age, the collapse of monopoly, the disintegration of the colonial system, and scientific and technological progress that has greatly reduced the distance between the various

people of the world and the ability of mankind to know himself and the universe has been infinitely increased. It is especially worth mentioning that since the twentieth century, the philosophical and social science theory of Euro-America which has occupied a leading position has undergone change itself and these changes are clearly beneficial for propelling the world in the direction of a pluralistic, engaged, tolerant and equitable dialog. All of this offers the Third World a new opportunity and possibilities for solving their above conundrum.

First, and theoretically, the West's long held commanding position has both subjectively and objectively been challenged. Ever since the principles of phenomenology were widely accepted, people have commonly recognized that "existence includes the existence of the agent him/herself and consciousness includes the consciousness of the object of consciousness". If there is no object of consciousness then consciousness has no validity and if there is no agent of consciousness, then there can be no object of consciousness. Therefore, everything changes with all changes in the space-time continuum inhabited by the agent. For example, man's understanding of the atomic level world was made possible by his experimentation and design, but the infinite domains which are yet to be reached by experimentation and design are incapable of existence as objects of consciousness. Since all systems and centers are established by man, they cannot but follow the shifts in subjective consciousness. As the American poet Wallace Stevens says in his poem: "I placed a jar in Tennessee, /And round it was, upon a hill. /It made the slovenly wilderness/Surround that hill. //The wilderness rose up to it, /And sprawled around, no longer wild." ("Anecdote of the Jar"). All centers and systems are constructs of man. They are all slivers sliced from the boundless universe by man's desire. It is extremely important to recognize this fact. It has been instrumental in the disintegration of the self-centerd developed world's culture and has moreover provided preconditions for the recognition of the pluralistic development of culture.

The Western Marxist, Jürgen Habermas, went on to point out that the constitution of any system must first "have its position defined." Defining a position means "setting one's boundaries". In other words, it must have a certain scope. Without boundaries or borders it is impossible to construct a system. But once constructed, a system is closed, which in turn marks the beginning of aging. The only strategy for resolving this contradiction is to engage—i.e., to identify a frame of reference, and in the act of comparison with this frame of reference, one must use a type of "external," "fresh" eye and closely reexamine oneself. This is what Habermas referred to as "inter-subjectivity". Thus, by escaping from the "self-imposed limits" of one's original system, it is possible to expand the self and accept and accommodate new systems. This type of receptiveness and fusion is a critique of the original system. When a system establishes a network of engagement with other systems and when their mutual integration is achieved, then the result is a rebuilding of the original system or the birth of the new. This is the "critique–engage–rebuild" development trajectory. Habermas' theory destroyed "Eurocentrism" and effected the "deconstruction" of the already mature Western cultural order and compelled the developed world to seek engagement with and frames of reference derived from other cultural paradigms and especially those of

the distant and distinctive Third World in order to achieve a breakthrough, emancipate itself from its current predicament, and achieve new growth.

Again, from the point of view of the actual conditions of the Third World, following political and economic development, many Third World nations were also anxious to cast aside their past marginalization, their subordinate status, and move towards the center, seeking equitable engagement with the culture of the developed world. During this process of engagement, the greatest difficulty to be encountered was naturally that of the tools of that engagement—language. Understanding is the basis of communication. In order to achieve mutual understanding, then there must be a common language acceptable to both sides. When a Third World culture enters the mainstream world culture, it is faced with a set of concepts that the developed world has constructed over a long period—a language that occupies a commanding position. From the point of view of literature, that means the thought processes and the discourse used to express those processes that have been formed [by all theories] from New Criticism, structuralism, psychoanalysis and reception aesthetics to multiculturalism and more. This discourse, backed by its economic and political power, has already been spread across the whole planet, almost to the point of having formed a kind of "discourse which is commonly acknowledged in its scope and is capable of achieving endorsement," just like English has in certain circles become the common language of exchange. If Third World culture wishes to participate in the international cultural dialog and achieve its aim of exchange and understanding, then it must acknowledge this real and familiar discourse. In reality, this discourse has been formed through accretion over many centuries and has gathered up the abstruse ponderings of thousands upon thousands of intellectuals as they reflect on mankind's many questions. It is truly of scientific value, and its achievements and mistakes are all capable of giving following generations pause and inspiration. Nevertheless, the danger is that if the Third World completely accepts this discourse, and they rely solely on the model developed by this discourse to interpret and trim their own culture, then a great swathe of unique, original living culture may be rejected because it does not conform to this model and so is incapable of being admitted to the core of world culture. At most it may enrich that mature model from some obscure angle. The so-called world cultural dialog remains a single tune, incapable of achieving its aim of engagement and exchange.

It seems that if we wish to engage in a true dialog then we must find an intermediary, one that is capable of comprehensively expressing the uniqueness and originality of both sides and transcending the paradigm of both sides, and providing to both sides a new foothold from which they are able to survey themselves a new. In order to create the preconditions and possibility for "renewal" and "rebuilding," I believe that this intermediary is the challenge faced by all humanity. No matter how different or diverse humanity is, on a macro-level there will always be innumerable things in common that enables the construction of the concept of "mankind." For example, the evolution of man's capacity for understanding (the great cultures of China, India, the Hebrews, Greece, etc., all appeared during the largely identical "pivotal age") or the relationship between man and science (apart from a small

number of remote regions, mankind could not but enter the information age together), etc. From the point of view of the field of literature, since mankind by and large shares a common life architecture (man and man, male and female, old and young, man and nature, man and destiny, the individual and the collective, etc.) as well as experiences (joy and pain, jubilation and distress, parting and congress, hope and despair, love and hate, birth and death, etc.), then the literature, which reveals mankind's life and experience in its content, must confront many common questions.

For example, each culture has its own response to the basic question of "what is literature", and each response is an open process, each culture having its own mode of thinking and its own unique "discourse" which expresses that mode. Dialog must address this same question by each offering their own response in their own way. These responses will reflect the long traditional historical echo and at the same time be subject to interpretation and examination by contemporaries. Because no cultural tradition is static and predetermined, but instead is a living and constantly evolving product which lives in the consciousness of modern beings and in the present space-time continuum, the world cultural dialog that we in the 1990s must engage in is just this kind of modern dialog. In other words, it is an equitable dialog in which all cultural systems are interpreted in the present. This type of dialog on the one hand must comprehensively display the unique and original features of all cultures that have been formed over a long period of time, whilst on the other, other cultures must be thoroughly understood and a fresh frame of reference must be found which facilitates a new examination of one's own culture and by means of "mutual subjectivity", break through the old paradigm, implement cultural modernization and achieve the reconfiguration of the new paradigm. And participating in this dialog is precisely the essential intermediate step if mankind is to face the common questions that confront him. The response of any specific cultural milieu to these questions can only be that only through an international cultural dialog can these questions find our present era's most comprehensive answer, whilst at the same time opening a broad horizon and prospect for answering these questions.

Faced with this type of scenario, if we are unable, given a contemporary interpretation, to amply demonstrate our culture's distinctive features and originality and actively participate in the contest of world cultural forces, then a people's culture, despite the fact that it may be rich and varied, or be possessed of a venerable history, has no choice but to be assimilated and lose its luster to the point of becoming moribund. And if it is afraid of being swallowed up and remains outside this contested space, then that culture will, because of its insularity, become rigid and ossify and become like the so-called "Indian culture" which adorns the American tourist shops—just like the "National essence" that was offered for the titillation of foreigners that Lu Xun railed against. This is the grim choice faced by Third World culture as it steps into the 1990s.

Long ago, Lu Xun argued "in the waning fire of the sword can be seen the dim light of early dawn, which is precisely the dawning of a new century." He loudly declared: "The light is upon us and if we do not raise our heads, then we will only

ever be able to see the luster of flashy materialism."[1] Lu Xun was referring to the beginning of the twentieth century, and we are currently entering the 1990s, which is the prelude to the twenty-first century. Let us at this critical juncture be possessed of acute foresight, and with an attitude of strength, stand before the distant echo of history and with uniqueness and originality, enter the international cultural dialog which is currently proceeding and make a contribution to the development of international culture as a whole and thus in the process of determining one's future survival in this battle of cultures, become one of the victors.

[1]Lu Xun, "Suiganlu di wushijiu—Shengwu", *Lu xun quanji*, Vol. 1, p. 425.

Chapter 5
On the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Journal *Dialogue Transculturel*

The ideal and attempts to initiate an "intercultural dialog" began in the '80s and early '90s. In March of 1991, the general headquarters, which were established in Paris at the European Transcultural Research Institute, convened in China, in conjunction with Zhongshan University, the first International Intercultural Scholarly Conference under the title "A strategy for bi-directional cultural recognition". In June of 1993, an international intercultural scholarly conference on an even larger scale was convened by scholars of the Silk Road from both China and Europe. The conference represented a conclusion to their joint investigation and was convened at Peking University under the banner "The unicorn and the dragon—on identifying misreadings in a ubiquitous China-Western culture". Again, in June 1996, another international scholarly conference entitled "Cultural Difference and Cultural Co-existence" was convened at Nanjing University. Although the several conferences were quite successful, and each published collections of both Chinese and Western language proceedings, nevertheless, everyone felt there was more to say and hoped for a platform where they could continue the conversation. Thus, the proposal to establish the journal *Dialogue Transculturel* was mooted at the Nanjing University conference. In August of that same year, Peking University, Nanjing University and the European Transcultural Research Institute met again in Beijing and consulted further on the direction, compilation, publication, and other aspects of the publication. In May 1997, a fourth international transcultural scholarly conference was held in Beijing under the title "The most pressing questions facing China and Europe in the next decade". After the conference this question was discussed in even more detail. In July of that same year, the French La Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme (fph), along with the European Transcultural Research Institute, Peking University's Transcultural Research Center, Nanjing University's Institute of comparative literature and culture and Zhongshan University's Professor Wang Bin convened in Paris the first China-Europe Transcultural Cooperation Conference and confirmed a range of specific cooperative projects, including the publication of the *Dialogue Transculturel* journal. The

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Conference decided that the Chinese edition of the *Dialogue* would be jointly edited by Peking University and Nanjing University, and that the French edition would be edited by the European Transcultural Research Institute and that the responsibility for matters relating to the publication of the Chinese edition be handed over to the China Cultural Academy's Transcultural Research Institute and the Shanghai Cultural Publishing Co. Ultimately the journal *Dialogue Transculturel* was introduced to readers in October 1998.

Dialogue Transculturel is an integral part of the major "Intercultural Monograph Series" project sponsored by La Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme and is, to date, the only Sino-French jointly published, bilingual journal. The main objective of both The Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme and the magazine itself is to promote the progress of mankind and the peaceful development of differing cultures and communication between them. The foundation offered strong spiritual and ideological support for the journal whilst not interfering with its specific work. The two sides have cooperated magnificently over the past decade and in the already published 23 issues, many special topics symbolize the cooperation between the two sides, their connection and their consensus. It is obvious that *Dialogue Transculturel* is not a pure academy-style scholarly journal. Its aim is to smash the single discipline and single culture monopoly and to encourage Sino-foreign intellectual exchange in the fields of politics, culture, social, and other thinking and enhance mutual understanding. Moreover, through introducing new thinking, it aims to make a contribution to Chinese social reform and to work toward the creation of a responsible, pluralistic, and united world. Whilst convening many international conferences one after another, it was as if we were deeply and privately saying with one voice: whilst we wait for history to reveal a new page, history remains expectant of our own actions. This voice has awakened us and mankind has a duty to heed it. Our magazine is a space for deep contemplation and there are many important topics to ponder over, such as social governance, higher education reform, rights and responsibilities, new development models, common ethical foundations, and more. The reason why we established our magazine was to search for a vehicle through which the shackles of the old paradigm could be smashed and the uniqueness and originality of all sides could find expression, allowing our contemplation and actions to truly develop. We believe that no matter how complex each cultural paradigm may be, and no matter how many differences there may be between us, we still all live on this shared planet and we all face the same challenges. Despite the fact that individuals from different cultural backgrounds will have different ideas because they hail from different lifestyles and ways of thinking, still, crossing the historical space-time continuum, modern humanity is able to use a modern perspective to ponder these questions anew. Only by initiating frequent interaction and linkages will these questions gradually achieve understanding and consensus.

Dialogue Transculturel usually arranges its articles by giving prominence to questions of great import. At the same time, it pays close attention to currently occurring national and international affairs. For example, on the question of tertiary education, issue 17 published Pierre Calame's and Su Gaiguan's paper on education

reform which reflected their attitude and experience of reform at Parisian universities and of the internet whilst at the same time responding to the debate of the Chinese higher education workers in the "Higher Education Reform Forum" section of the magazine's 13th issue. Following this, the magazine's 19th issue went on to publish a special issue dedicated to "Higher education and the university spirit". The issue included Pierre Calame's "The University of the 21st Century", Chen Lichuan's "The transformation of European Universities and their mission" , Gao Xuanyang's "An introduction to Edgar Morin's pedagogical thought," the President of Moscow University V. A. Sadovnichii. and the President of St Petersburg University L. A. Verbitskaya's. speeches and the papers of other Chinese higher education workers. Most recently, in response to the blocking of the Olympic torch in Paris, the magazine in its 23rd issue published an article which gave vent to the personal opinions of Antoine Danchin, President of the Science Council of Pasteur College, and Pierre Calame, Chair of Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation Press for Human Progress.

The magazine in these special columns amply demonstrated our aim and distinctive character in establishing the magazine. For example, issue 4s "Between spirit and conviction: a century of exchange" roundtable conference took the lead and published the philosopher Derrida's *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* and Umberto Eco's *The Search for the Language of Communication*. Volume 6 carried the special columns "The humanities" and "Universal ethics," whilst volume 9 addressed the topic of "Creating a responsible, united and diverse world," introducing a special column entitled "The inaugural world citizen's conference" which carried the "Charter of human responsibility" which was passed at the conference and all of the important speeches of the conference attendees. These columns comprehensively demonstrated our equal emphasis on ideological theory and concrete practice and the position which we adopted regarding the relationship between these two things. The idea that we hoped to convey was that "ideologues" and "practitioners" cannot be separated. If we wish to know this world, then this can only be achieved through action and contemplation and an exchange of concrete experience. The name *Dialogue Transculturel* is a considerably complex notion of closely integrated thought and practice. This notion not only indicates our theoretical position, but at the same time it demonstrates our concrete actions. The *Dialogue Transculturel* concept indicates the existence of multiple cultures whilst at the same time touches on the real interaction between different cultures.

The existence and development of multiculturalism is already an indisputable reality. Over more than three millennia the many different cultures of Greece, China, the Hebrews and India as well as the Arab-Islamic culture, African culture, and more have all profoundly influenced human society today. Currently, after casting aside the shackles of colonialism, the Third World urgently needs to reform its own old cultural traditions and complete a modern cultural transformation based on a new foundation and in an equal dialog with the West. In another respect, the West's cultural development to date has also created a number of problems, especially its need to find a frame of reference, an "other," in order to facilitate the adoption of an "external," "fresh" eye, and closely reexamine itself, breaking

through the "self-limitation" of the past and seeking new growth. Hence, the Western cultural dialog poses a significant historical demand on contemporary cultural development. Naturally, dialog is not able to resolve all questions, but it is always preferable to confrontation and perhaps only dialog is the most important channel if we are to avoid carnage and war.

Of course, "dialog" is no easy matter. In the course of dialog some four types of paradox are often encountered. The first is that between the universal and the particular, the second is between the preservation of purity as against mutual influence, the third being the paradox between the other and the self, and the fourth being whether the discourse of engagement is appropriate or not.

The paradox between the universal and the particular is primarily expressed in a dogged adherence to a strict nationalism by a number of people in the postcolonial period. They unilaterally stress that most things that are deemed "universal" are arbitrary and rigid and that they tend to be violently foisted on people. They oppose any structural constraints of any kind and claim that there is no such thing as universality, only unrelated particularities. Another group insists that their so-called "universality" is the "truth" and that it should be imposed on the world as a whole. In reality, "the universal and the particular" is a topic which has long been debated by traditional culture, and ancient and modern, China and the rest of the world, all accept this to be a continually changing paradox. Moreover, in the current unique circumstances, these two groups are deeply divided. This division has seriously affected all aspects of rapprochement and made social development difficult. Reconnecting and healing this breach and, through continuing dialog, restoring the proper relationship between the universal and the particular is an important aspect of the development of a diversified culture, preserving the cultural ecology and easing cultural conflict.

How then can we preserve purity and at the same time accept beneficial mutual influences is one of the paradoxes of the dialog process. If we wish to preserve cultural diversity, naturally the more pure, the more "genuine" each type of culture is, the better. But in order to develop, there must unavoidably be mutual permeation, assimilation and supplementation between different cultures such that "I am part of you, and you of me". Is this incompatible with preserving the peculiarities and differences of the original cultures? Might this not lead to a gradual shrinking of the differences between the cultures of the world, and result in their eventual disappearance because of this conglomerative trend? In fact, from the point of view of historical development, the absorption of one culture by another has invariably occurred through the prism and filter of one's own culture. After a culture has been absorbed, it is invariably unable to develop along its original pathways, but instead produces, in conjunction with the current culture, a new, even more brilliant product. For this reason, the result of the interaction between globalization and diversification is not that of "convergence" leading to "amalgamation," but rather the engendering of new qualities and new differences on a new foundation.

The question of the relationship between the Other and the Self in the dialog is indeed an extremely complex one. First of all, we begin from the Self and always seek to assimilate the Other, to convince them to accept our way of thinking. If we

operate in this manner then the result can only be to sacrifice the distinctive nature of the Other and gradually reach convergence. Thus, it is especially stressed that our point of departure should be the "other," and that we should concentrate on what is least clear in the "other", in fact that aspect which can be least understood. It is because that the reason why I am "not" the other is not because of his character, appearance or psychology, but because of his very dissimilarity. And it is precisely because of this dissimilarity that my relationship with him/her is not like the normal amalgam, but is in fact a relationship of two individuals facing each other. Furthermore, if we only stress dissimilarity then it is very difficult to achieve the aim of understanding and engagement. But if we do not stress dissimilarity, then we may experience a jumbled fusion or something similar. This type of paradox between the other and the self is in fact the most fascinating and at the same time most difficult aspect of the "productive dialog".

There is also a question of discourse in the dialog between different cultures. The first requirement of dialog is that the two sides share a common discourse that is comprehensible and acceptable to both sides and that can facilitate communication (it is not a language but rather more rules of engagement). For many years now, the developed world with its West-centric manner of thinking and mode of conduct has become accustomed to demanding that they use an attitude of equality and employ a discourse that attempts to understand the unfamiliar in the other culture, which is not an easy task. Meanwhile, what the Third World faces is an entire conceptual system which the developed world has long evolved, a system that extends to the political, economic, cultural, and other domains and which has for a long time occupied a commanding position and a discourse that has been extensively employed, and to reclaim, even partially, one's native discourse is not an easy task. The problem with which we are directly confronted is: in the transcultural dialogue, if we cannot use the discourse of a foreign culture completely, nor exclusively use the discourse of our own culture, then what kind of discourse should we employ if we are to achieve a dialog? This difficult paradox of the choice of discourse is an extremely important question in dialog.

The resolution of the above paradox is not something that can be solved overnight, but if we recognize it then at least we will have the grounds for proceeding with the dialog and raising the quality of the dialog. For example, after multiple conversations, perhaps it is possible through practice to gradually construct a new discourse that can be understood and accepted by both sides. The important point is that we must identify subjects of common interest and initiate investigations from different cultural angles, exchange opinions, and in the fullness of time, a new discourse will take shape. The *Transcultural Dialog Series* has already raised many topics in this vein, such as: "How to address the suffering of humanity—is that suffering greater or less than that experienced by humanity 2,000 years ago?," "Is cultural development trending towards convergence or diversification?," "What is the most pressing question for China and Europe in the next decade?," "Anxiety about technical progress," "The secret of the human genome and the future of humanity," "Laozi and structural disintegration—world culture in the 21st century," "Is the world facing an end game or has the future already begun?," "Why can't the

West ignore China when they study philosophy?," "How can we seek a language of engagement?," and more. These questions have been posed by scholars from all around the world and have attracted the interest of a broad range of scholars here at home. Naturally, the *Series* also carries a considerable number of articles that discuss certain unique characteristics of a given culture, but due to different observational angles and differences in the cultural frameworks of the recipients, obscurities in the dialog still exist.

From ancient time right up to the present, all cultures have explored the common conundrum of discovering the path of continued existence, and literature and art always march at the forefront of this quest. This is because literature principally gives vent to emotion with relatively little consideration of utility, which encourages enthusiastic exchange. So-called comparative literature is a type of transcultural literary research and what it studies is "common literary traits" of all types of literature between different cultures. It is itself a "cultural arena" built by different cultures or a product of the dialog between cultural networks. Thus, comparative literature is often an extremely important and distinguishing part of *Dialogue Transculturel*.

Finally, I would like to convey to all some good news: a conference entitled "International Scholarly Conference on Transcultural Dialog" to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of *Dialogue Transculturel* will be convened jointly by the School of Comparative Literature and Culture of Nanjing University, Peking University's Transcultural Research Center, France's Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme and *Dialogue Transculturel* on 25–27 September 2008 in Nanjing, China. This conference will afford a further opportunity for us to undertake further equitable and engaging transcultural dialog activities.

Chapter 6
Problems and the Current Development Status of Chinese Comparative Literature

Written for France's *Journal of Comparative Literature*: *Special Issue on China*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese Comparative Literature emerged along with China's modern literature. As the founder of China's modern literature, Lu Xun noted: the aim of the new literature is to "externally speaking, prevent ourselves from trailing behind the rest of the world in terms of intellectual developments."[1] This statement marks an end to China's literary isolation and presages the commencement of the new Chinese literature's conscious integration into the dialog of world literature along the path of comparative literature.

The Chinese Comparative Literature Association was jointly established in Shenzhen in 1985 by some 36 universities across the country. In 1998, the "Comparative Literature and World Literature" discipline was formally designated as a secondary discipline within "Chinese Language and Literature" by the Ministry of Education. Thenceforth, comparative literature received a tremendous boost both popularly and officially.

Since China began reforming and opening up, its comparative literature circles have discussed many important questions and reached relatively unanimous conclusions. For example, we have discussed the relationship between comparative literature and world literature and generally believe that any point along the coordinates delineated by the ancient-to-modern literary timeline and the China/foreign literary continuum which is linked to a reading subject is of necessity an integral part of world literature. Nobody is capable of mastering the literature of the world as a whole and there is nobody who can be described as "a master of world literature". Comparative literature, on the other hand, is different. It is a type of supra-cultural and meta-disciplinary study of literature. In fact, when one discusses world literature, one can never divorce oneself from one's own cultural pulse, because every moment in history begins with a specific agent, distilling the past, confronting the present, and creating the future. Studying the different agents,

[1]Lu Xun: "Wenhua pianzhi lun" [1907]—(from John Kowallis *Concerning Imbalanced Cultural Development*, Trans.)

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different literatures, different cultures, and different languages is the core of comparative literature. Thus, it can be said that comparative literature provides the theories and perspectives for the study of world literature and world literature provides the resources and foundation for the study of comparative literature.

There has already been some debate over the question of the boundless nature of the whole comparative literature discipline if we include the "interdisciplinary research of literature" in comparative literature. But as Professor Yang Zhouhan said in the Preface to *Chao xueke bijiao wenxue yanjiu* [An Interdisciplinary Study of Comparative Literature] in 1989: "We need to be equipped with a type of 'interdisciplinary' research vision: not only do we need to transcend national and linguistic boundaries, but we also need to transcend the boundaries of discipline such that we interrogate literature against an even broader cultural background." China's saying that "Poetry and art share a common source" and that rites, music and dance are born of the same mother, etc., has long maintained this type of rich tradition.

We have also energetically reversed several tendencies that were not completely satisfactory, like shallow comparisons between works or between authors, ignoring the spiritual foundation of China's literature and inappropriately applying Western theories to it, or alternatively branding all Western theoretical interpretations of Chinese literature as "aphasia" and rejecting them outright, etc.

Today, when it is impossible for different cultures not to come in contact, our conviction is: the process of encounters between cultures is not one of "persuasion," "assimilation," or "amalgamation to form an alloy," even less is it a process of "conquest" or "annexation," but rather under differing circumstances, through a process of "constructive dialog," mutual recognition, confirmation and complementation, it is a process of transformation into a new entity. This process is first founded on the premise that a given culture actually feels that the other culture is capable of offering its own some benefit (both cognitive and aesthetic) and so voluntarily accepting or rejecting it. The result is not "convergence" but a mutual "improvement" with new qualities and differences created by this new understructure, like two circles intersecting at a certain point, whereupon each continues to develop along its own path, forming a self that differs from its original and also different from the new circle of the "other,"

The world has entered the twenty-first century and China's comparative literature, apart from the fact that research into the conventions of the discipline in such areas as "the relationship between Chinese and foreign literature," "physiology," "the matics," "genre studies," and more is making extensive and substantial strides, on the following few aspects in particular it has also witnessed substantial breakthroughs.

The first is the new developments in comparative poetics. As the world enters the postmodern era, comparative poetics has undergone fundamental change. All manner of "theories" has replaced the original grand philosophical paradigm. These theories not only straddle disciplines but they also straddle different cultures. This is precisely the hallmark of what Edward Said has dubbed the postmodern "travelling theory." The new comparative poetics strives to promote the common, universal, and international traits which emerge from the theories and aesthetic values of creative poetics, country-specific poetics, and ethnic poetics. At the same time it

seeks to identify what is different, special, or ethnic in these common, universal and international features of the different poetics and undertake a fused hermeneutic approach, to progress the formation of poetic concepts that are convincing and transmissible, finally converging into a pluralistic, fluid, world poetic trend. This is the "third type of poetics" which has been generated by the convergence and integration of Chinese and foreign poetics. This poetics is not a preexisting poetics of any foreign country, nor is it part of an ancient Chinese traditional poetics, but rather it is a pluralistic new poetics which has, on the foundation of cross-border materials, cross-border aesthetics, and interdisciplinarity, been generated through interaction and the extensive assimilation of external poetics whilst continuing to take what is distinctly native as its main focus.

Comparative research in literary anthropology and ethnic literature has currently become the core question in China's comparative literary research. The scholars of comparative literature who are engaged in this type of research have come to realize that contemporary specialist literary education obstructs and stifles the development of native knowledge, engendering the three great abuses of text-centeredness, Han chauvinism and a China Central Plains-centered mentality. They argue that we should put even more emphasis on living literature, a pluralistic ethnic interactive literature and an orally transmitted literature, and comprehensively give voice to the full gamut of its cultural capacity, including its harmonious narratives, its story-telling, performances, beliefs, ceremonies, stage props, *Thangkas*, images, medicine, trances, carousings, customs, etc., and gradually move from a paradigm of narrow research on literary qualities and content to an evolving research paradigm in a culturally reductive context. They suggest a reconstructed literary anthropological significance for China's literary outlook, advocating a search for a new path and new materials to reenter a history and literary history which is beyond the historical perspective of the Central Plains dynastic narrative and which begins the process of construction with the interaction and interplay of ethnic relations.

In recent years, there have also been significant advances in research into Chinese diasporic literature. The literature of overseas Chinese is the largest body of immigrant and expatriate literary creation in the world. Since the turn of the century, hundreds of works and a great number of academic papers have suggested a range of theoretical topics relating to deepening and developing Chinese diasporic literature. For example: Chinese diasporic literature's quest for a unique poetic discourse and cultural status, the collision between the Sinitic cultural consciousness and the local native cultural consciousness, etc. Research into the "nativism", "diaspora" and "modernity", as well as, the "cosmopolitanism," "marginality," and "cross-cultural nature" of overseas Chinese literature, and especially comparative research into Chinese diasporic literature written in the mother tongue and a non-mother tongue, has become a major focus of Chinese comparative literature.

China has not only had almost two thousand years of translation history, but the number of people involved in translation and the number of translated works is by far the greatest in the world. Literary translation is not merely a matter of script conversion, but it involves a transmission and remodeling of cultural concepts. Translated literature cannot possibly exist without a literary re-creation by the

translator and the responsibility of the translator is not only to creatively reconstruct the original meaning, but he/she needs to "create the possibility for exchange in places where exchange is not possible." In other words, he/she needs to develop the native language in places where the two languages intersect. Thus, translated literature is not the same as foreign literature. Once a piece of literature is translated into Chinese it should become an indispensable and important part of Chinese literature. Translation is currently establishing itself independently of the traditional foreign language academic discipline and forming an important component of comparative literature.

Interdisciplinary research on literature and theology is steadily becoming a "pre-eminent field," with one summer vacation international scholarly conference every year discussing such questions as "The religious interpretation of literature and culture," "The question of communality in cultural and theological research," "The theological way forward for literary and cultural research," "Sinology, theology and cultural research," or "Theology and poetics." The *Jidujiao wenhua xuekan* [Journal of Christian Culture] compiled such special collections as "Poetics and Theology" or "The Poetic Nature and Spirituality." Many volumes of academic journals such as *Shenxue meixue* [Theological Aesthetics] and *Shengjing wenxue yanjiu* [Research on Biblical Literature] have already appeared and their ranks of authors have expanded to take in such diverse disciplines as religious studies, philosophy, history, anthropology, and sociology and have become outstanding frontline performers in interdisciplinary research.

In sum, having entered the twenty-first century, China's literary research circles have undergone tremendous changes and such concepts and methodologies as mutual recognition, mutual affirmation, complementarity, and two-way elucidation which comparative literature has promoted in the process of an equitable dialog have broadly replaced the unidirectional absorption, borrowing, criticism, and emulation of the past. This is true not only within the disciplinary context of world literature and comparative literature, but is currently common throughout all fields of Chinese classical and modern literature, literary theory, specific foreign literary studies, and other literary disciplines.

Naturally, in this upsurge of transformation and development, there remains a considerable number of theoretical questions that await resolution, along with new questions that continue to arise:

First, there is the question of "The relationship between the generally applicable and the disparate" that we have discussed for so long already. Last century, after the collapse of the colonial system, the citizens of some newly independent countries were anxious to construct a recognized identity, stressing the differences between different cultures in order to resist the attempts of certain powerful cultures to use the banner of "universal values" to smother the cultures of other peoples. This was absolutely essential. But, there were also a few countries that unilaterally highlighted absolute differences between different cultures and their "incompatibility." If there is nothing in common and they are "incompatible," then this denies the possibility of dialog and engagement. So do "shared cultural values" actually exist or are different cultures really incompatible?

Next, there is the question of the relationship between preserving traditional culture and accepting outside influences. If native cultures need to preserve their "purity," then if they accept outside influences will their "original essence and flavor" be changed? There has long been a saying in China that "the more ethnic something is, the more global it will be," but "ethnic" is far from being a closed system, nor is it immutable. It will inevitably be changed through its interaction with other cultures. Nor are "ethnic" and "global" isolated. The "ethnic" must win the acknowledgement and affection of the "global" and in highlighting its own uniqueness it also needs to consider its audience's expectations and how it will be received. So is the unavoidable infiltration and assimilation between different cultures anathema to the preservation of the unique characteristics and differences of the original culture? Might this kind of permeation and exchange result in the gradual shrinking of the differences in world culture, leading to extinction through melding and fusion?

A further question is that of the "self" and the "other" in the dialog. Since the "other" is everything that is "not" the self, then one should first of all pay attention to the actual differences between the two. Only by fully displaying these "face to face" mutual differences will the "other" be capable of becoming a point of reference for reflecting on the "self." But, solely stressing the mutual differences will lead to "mutual irrelevance" and will make the aim of achieving understanding and engagement difficult. If mutual differences are not highlighted then the unique nature of the other will be sacrificed and the other and the self will converge. So how should we solve this dilemma?

Even more important is the question of discourse in the dialog between different cultures. The most important condition for equitable dialog is for both sides to be able to understand and receive from the other, for there to be a language that enables communication. Presently, the developing countries face a highly effective conceptual system which has over many years been developed by the developed world and that is backed by its formidable politico-economic might which has to a certain extent already been widely accepted. This discursive paradigm has collated the combined musings of untold numbers of intellectuals over centuries on all manner of questions to do with the human condition and, moreover, has, through interaction with different cultures, been enriched and developed. If we were to discard this discourse then continued existence would be difficult. Nevertheless, if we were to exclusively employ this discursive framework and the patterns that it has developed to interpret and dissect our own native culture, then a large proportion of the unique, creative and living features of the native culture would, because it does not fit with this pattern, be dismissed, and if this is indeed the result, then the so-called dialog could only be a monocultural monolog and would simply be supplemented by nothing more than a few random materials from far-flung climes, and a genuine interactive dialog would be impossible. How then can we construct a true, creative new discourse that will facilitate an equitable dialog?

Apart from these questions which we have long debated and on which we are yet to reach a satisfactory resolution, innumerable new questions continue to arise. For example, the question of the "misappropriation" of newly independent cultures by

more powerful cultures and how the former can finally achieve a thoroughgoing liberation from its spiritual colonization; or the question of how we can sketch out a history of writing and reading which is cross-cultural and transcends space-time; and questions concerning the shift in print and text-based culture and the rise of the image-infused new media culture which both China and the world are currently experiencing, as well as the interwoven and mutually constructed trending relationship between the two.

All in all, we are situated at an unprecedented transformational juncture and people increasingly sense that in the process of constructing the ideal of a pluralistic and symbiotic world culture, the literature (and especially comparative literature) is becoming increasingly crucial. All of the world's scholars of comparative literature and of literature itself must advance shoulder to shoulder, forge a new world of the spirit and together build this great enterprise so as to rethink the meaning and mode of human existence.

Part II
When East Meets West

Chapter 7
History—Literature—Literary History: A Distinguished Meeting on Comparative Literature in the 1980s

Literary theory, literary criticism, and literary history have always been recognized as three integral components of literary research. Currently, the advances in literary theory are extremely rapid and literary criticism is experiencing a sudden transformation with the emergence of large numbers of works from different schools. Faced with similar circumstances, however, literary history continues to follow the traditions of the past and progress is slow. As the German literary critic Hans Robert Jauss points out: "Literary historians are trapped in a type of objective idealism, confined to narrating a finite past, not willing to comment on their era which has yet to conclude, and blindly handing all contemporary literature over to the literary critic whilst retaining the 'famous works and classics' for themselves, maintaining a gap of one or two generations between themselves and the latest developments in literature… This type of literary historian thus becomes a parasite to a certain type of [literary] criticism."[1] He believes: "The established form of literary history can already scarcely find a place for itself in the intellectual life of our era. The static system of observation that they relied on in the past is itself now difficult to sustain." In fact, "Literary history has already clearly disappeared from university curricula."[2] In universities across Euro-America, that type of sequential literary publication approach, that type of "lineal" literary history which follows the chronology of great writers has indeed ceased to exist. Naturally this does not presage an end to the importance of literary history. Rather, it indicates the necessity for it, in the current context of a rapidly developing literary theory and literary critical foundation, to rise above itself and achieve renewal. In recent years, a new recognition and reappraisal of literary history has been an abiding and popular topic in Western literary research circles.

In October 1987, Princeton, Indiana and Los Angeles successively convened the second Sino-U.S. Comparative Literature Symposium and it was against this

[1] *Jieshou meixue yu jieshou lilun* (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1987), pp. 4–6.
[2] Ibid.

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D. Yue, *China and the West at the Crossroads*, China Academic Library,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-1116-0_7

background that questions relating to history, literature, and literary history were intensively discussed.

The paper of the chair of the conference, Prof. Earl Miner, convenor of Princeton University's School of Comparative Literature, was titled "History, Literature, and Literary History." Prof. Miner argued that the concept of history itself had undergone tremendous change. In the past, people did not pay attention to "the history of events," because owing to the limitations of time and space, very few individuals were able to personally witness the incident itself as recorded in the manuscripts. Since it then has been "narrated," it will of necessity be subject to the limitations and prejudices of the narrator. "Events themselves are devoid of knowledge and are unable to narrate themselves," and it is very difficult to ascertain to what extent man's intelligence is actually able to interpret an incident authentically. In fact, "Narrative history is nothing but the knowledge of a given set of people of an historical event," and this type of knowledge is "based on historical accounts," "based on the narrator's intrinsic knowledge and his/her current desires and hopes." In other words, any historical account cannot but incorporate the narrator's imagination.

Professor Yang Zhouhan from Peking University in his paper entitled "Fictionality in the narration of history" which attracted wide attention, analyzed further several important aspects of this type of imagination: first of all in terms of the selection and arrangement of materials; second in the fact that a certain type of literary pattern will inevitably be imposed on these materials, for example writing it as a tragedy, a fortunate event, or as a farce; thirdly, if you want to write a history that constitutes a reasonable narrative, then you must employ a priori reasoning to discover the thinking or motive behind the incident and seek the relationship between incidents; and last, the externally applied pattern is both indicative and metaphorical and attempts to evoke both a reflective and an emotional response. Thus the history which historians construct precisely reflects their own minds. But historians' minds, no matter whether temporally or spatially, are of necessity different from that of historical figures. Any conclusion reached by an historian may carry distortions or imagination. Professor Zhou further observed the attitude of China's scholars of ancient history toward the question of historical imagination and pointed out that Wang Chong long ago used the concepts of "abstraction" and "embellishment" and described imaginary phenomena in history: the former indicates something that does not accord with common sense, superstition, or the superimposition of Confucian prejudice, etc., while the latter indicates exaggerated language and inaccuracy. Liu Zhiji further pointed out that political pressure, moral considerations, the "pros and cons of world affairs," etc., can all facilitate fabricated historical narrative.

Since history and literature can both be fabricated and both are narrated, and neither can be validated (history can never be repeated like a chemical experiment), then what is the difference between the two? According to current wisdom, a work of literature is not an "object" which presents the same face to all readers at all times. It is not a completed monument which stands independently declaiming its eternal essence. Rather, you must rely on reading to liberate the text from the

material form of words and sentences in order for it to have a contemporaneous existence, just as music relies on performance to liberate it from the notes on a score. Thus Professor Meng Erkang argues: "Great readers will become part of the work's history." For example, Pope, Johnson, Arnold, and Eliot's interpretation of John Dryden have already become an integral part of what constitutes the meaning of Dryden's works. Beginning from this concept, literature is a type of "dialog" between the writer and the reader, a type of authentic externally sought exchange of aesthetic appreciation.

Professor Meng Erkang in his paper stressed that the difference between literature and history lies in the fact that "People read literary works for the works themselves" and not to understand an historical event which lies outside the aesthetic appreciation experience. What a work of literature narrates is an imaginary world, a world which can be drawn from history, but which can also be completely divorced from history. For example, *Journey to the West* draws its material from the historical reality of Tangseng's quest for the Buddhist scriptures; however neither Zhubajie (Pig) nor Sunwukong (Monkey) could possibly have emerged from any historical narrative. As the author has created his own imaginary world, the historian is not able to cast aside the "original historical" constraints of the incident. Therefore, in one sense the author is much freer than the historian, but in another sense, the historian is able to analyze his/her object from multiple angles and with multiple methodologies while the author must, within the imaginary world that he/she has created, maintain a consistent methodology and logic. For example, *Journey to the West* must, from beginning to end, maintain that imaginary world constituted by the monk, the monkey, the pig, Sha seng, and the white horse, and if a different methodology is employed or a different cast of characters and animals were to be used, then it would no longer be *Journey to the West* but another novel altogether.

The head of the University of Chicago's Center for Comparative Literature, Professor Anthony Yu, in his paper entitled "History, Imagination and Reading China's Narrative Literature", particularly stressed that "Traditional poets were only able to confine themselves to a certain type of narrative account, while the historian is able to select from all kinds of contradictory interpretations in order to probe the facts and the reality." His line of thinking is strikingly similar to Prof. Yang Zhouhan's in that whilst expounding on the relationship between history and literature, he argues that if we say that Western works of history frequently impose a certain type of literary narrative pattern, then China's works of literature frequently impose patterns of certain works of history and display a type of attempt at "historical emulation." He argues that the "wilderness," "illogicality," and "a historicity" that the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* stressed so much was a reaction to this type of traditional "historiographic pattern." This kind of mutual borrowing between literature and history also shows that the two are not the same. Finally, Professor Meng Erkang argued that the difference between literature and history lies in the former's accumulative and non-exclusive nature. He claims: "Since the unique aesthetic character of a work of art lies in itself" (of itself), therefore works of art will not contend with each other. "Every work is a world unto

itself", "the Han Dynasty had its carved jade horses and later dynasties also had carved horses, and they did not negate one another." Poems that bemoan the "longevity of nature but the brevity of human life" can be counted in their millions, yet they each have a value of their own. Nevertheless, the numbers of historical narratives that approximate historic events are only of one type. Narrative historians can only advance by negating the foundation of their forebears. This is precisely the opposite of literature's accumulative and non-exclusive nature. Therefore, history and literature have points both in common and otherwise.

Since the notions of both history and literature have undergone tremendous changes because they have had elements of the agent inserted into them, has the notion of literary history undergone a corresponding transformation? For example, are there immutable, stable, objective laws that govern literary development? If there are, what are these laws? This question gave rise to passionate debates both during and after the conference, but no consensus has been reached on the question to date. Harvard University's Professor Stephen Owen's paper "Ruined Estates: Literary History and the Poetry of Eden,"[3] Columbia University's Professor Pauline Yu's "Anthologies—Classic Works—Classical Chinese Poetry" and Professor Andrew Plaks, the Director of Princeton University's Department of Eastern Language and Culture's "Where the Lines Meet: Parallelism in Chinese and Western Literature"[4] all began with specific literary phenomena and analyzed this question to varying degrees and attracted the intense interest of the audience.

Professor Stephen Owen argued that the most regularly occurring pattern throughout the long process of literary development is that of "From naiveté to decline." Any literature's beginnings is always natural, unsophisticated, and unfettered. It stands at the threshold of a sequential process, no need to be anxious about repeating what others have done and no need to struggle to surpass one's predecessors. Stephen Owen gave the example of Homer's epic poetry, Shakespeare's plays, Defoe's novels, the poetry of the High Tang, the plays of the Yuan, and the prose of the May Fourth period as examples of this naïve "paradise poetry" beginning. Following that, although there may be rises and falls, the overall direction is nevertheless toward decline. Dryden, the English critic, in his An Essay on Dramatic Poesy declares: "They have ruined their estates themselves, before they came to their children's hands. There is scarce a humour, a character, or any kind of plot, which they have not used. All comes sullied or wasted to us."[5] The general exhaustion of expressions, their depletion and lack of new meaning all presages a type of impotence and deterioration that emerges with age. Owen discussed how China's Ming period critic Xie Zhen in his Four Seas Poetic Discussions also clearly mentioned the irretrievability of this type of natural

[3]"Huidiaode chanye: wenxueshi he Leyuan zhi shi." For published text see *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, Vol. 10, No. 1–2 (Jul., 1988), pp. 21–41.

[4]"Pingxingxian jiaohui hefang, Zhong–Xi wenxuezhong de duizhang" see Ibid., pp. 43–60. Also published in *Poetics Today* 11 (3) (Spring 1991), pp. 523–546.

[5]See Stephen Owen, "Ruined Estates: Literary History and the Poetry of Eden," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR),* Vol. 10, No. 1–2 (Jul., 1988), p. 21.

rusticity. He wrote: "The 'Nineteen Old Poems' say things straight out, without making any effort in the choice of words. It's like a young candidate for the imperial examinations talking with a friend in ordinary speech about family matters."[6] Later works mimicked this, "learning the dialect of a state officer so as to show affectation in one's speech."[7] "The tones are well balanced here, and the passage is sonorous; but when one recites it, one can't help noticing the affectation. Among the poets of the Wei and Tsin [Jin] the dialect of a state officer and ordinary speech are found in about equal proportions; but by the time we reach the Ch'i [Qi] and Liang, whenever someone opens his mouth, it's always the official dialect. The official dialect requires energy; ordinary home speech is sparing of energy; the official dialect is forced; ordinary home speech is natural. But if a person fails in modeling himself on antiquity, then he drifts into what is low and vulgar."[8] Both Chinese and Western studies all argue that it is impossible to recapture the lost innocence and naturalness. Professor Owen points out: "The willed 'natural' produced only a parody of the natural, the 'low and vulgar'."[9]

In order to avoid the predicament of having no hope of return or restoration, and in order to remove the pain that is born of this unattainability and shame, ultimately, to escape the menace of the ancients over modern man, people created historicism. Owen states: "The sudden and immense growth of literary scholarship in seventeenth century China and in late eighteenth century Europe is the immediate consequence of historicism, and the intense relation grows up between new literature and literary scholarship in both civilizations."[10] To his mind, the birth of historicism, its development and the aftermath is also a regular phenomenon because people "needed a temporally open structure that permitted a sequence of coherent systems of value. That structure was historicism. In historicism everything has a place within the historical structure of the whole and must be judged according to its place."[11] Thus the achievements of the ancients that modern man is unable to match can be merged into a complex sequence, creating a protective distance and radically altering the standards of value. Owen argues that Ye Xie's "speaking of poetry in terms of the times"[12] and "speaking of the times through poetry" theory solved historicism's primary duty, namely explaining anew the pattern of the "decline of the poetry of Eden." Ye Xie claims that "there are [social and political] deviations in the times and … poetry goes along with these. But when the times undergo a deviation and fall from the norm, poetry undergoes a deviation and yet does not fall from its norm. Thus flourishing without decline is the source of poetry."[13] "[I]n the poetry of later ages, there is both

[6]Ibid., p. 30.

[7]"Xue shuo guan hua, bian zuo qiangzi." Translation adapted from ibid., p. 31.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 34.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Quoted in ibid.

[13]Quoted in ibid., p. 36.

norm and deviation; but here the way in which norm and deviation are tied to poetry refers to differences in formal models, in tone, in the ways in which concepts are formed, in diction, in novelty versus archaism, in movements upward and downward. Here, we are discussing the times in terms of their poetry [i.e., history as literary history]: poetry undergoes a deviation and the times follow along with it. Thus we have had alternations of flourishing and decline in the Han, Wei, Six Dynasties, T'ang [Tang], Sung [Song], Yü an [Yuan], and Ming; and only by a deviation were people able to redeem the decline of the norm. Thus an alternation of flourishing and decline occurs in the stream of poetry."[14] Meanwhile Owen believes that "this is the quintessential historicist move: instead of change as a falling away from ancient perfection, decline occurs in the failure to undergo internal change. It is precisely by an act of deviation that literature is redeemed from decline."[15] Ye Xie goes on to argue that the reason why "the Airs and Odes were in decline" is because "[T]hose who claim to know about poetry… Since they are incapable of understanding how the source and streams, the roots and branches, the normative and deviant, and flourishing and decline all operate in cycles, they are further incapable of discerning the thought of either ancient or modern authors—neither their thought, nor the energy of their talents, nor the relative depth of their work, nor their relative levels, nor their strengths, and weaknesses. They cannot tell which ones were followers and which ones made a break with the past; they can't tell which innovators were and which were derivative; they can't tell which ones sunk into decline and which ones saved literature from decline and made it flourish again. They make analyses in minute detail and combine them with unifying syntheses."[16] Owen argues that Ye Xie here offers a type of "organic model" "in which every stage is intelligible only in terms of what its preceding ground was and what fulfilled it later."[17] This is also the fundamental essence of historicism. This type of historicist understanding "relativises" the predecessors and places them in a "determinate place"[18] such that subsequent authors need no longer pay homage to and revere their forebears. This also completes the mission of historicism. Professor Owen argues that the same question appeared independently in both China and the West, which were separated by vast distances. Both saw the rise of historicism which proves that this is a standard phenomenon which is independent of any subjective will of man. But historicism itself is one of man's own creations. It is a subjective product, and not an immutable so-called "objective law." In concluding his paper, he declares: "The historicist's promise of subsuming all history by understanding is the great evasion of human temporality, the pain of our historical limitation that was so strong in the Edenic theory of poetry. A tragic vision of our limitation is replaced by a fraudulent and brittle optimism."[19]

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[14]Quoted in ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Quoted in ibid.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Terminology taken from ibid., p. 38 and p. 25, respectively.

[19]Ibid., p. 40.

Pauline Yu[20] discussed the question of the law/pattern of literary development from a different angle. She argued that Greece, China, Japan, and others, completely different cultural systems, each have their own major literary collections, amongst which some have been respected as classics. The process of progression from literary work to literary collection to classic can illustrate a lot of questions. For example, the formation and development of China's two earliest collections of poetry, the Book of Poetry and the Songs of Chu, has long provided key data for a string of fundamental questions of China's traditional literature. These questions include: "The definition and nature of literature, the relationship between literature and history, the evolution and progress of literature, the text and its relation to the author, the evaluation of literature and its influence on the fate of the poet and the interpretation of poetry, etc." The process of a work becoming a classic is a type of "Application of cultural power" and it embodies a type of protectionism, standardization, evaluation, and dissemination. This process is determined by a type of cultural power and in turn influences the further formation and development of that culture. This can also be said to be a general rule. The conference also discussed the question that this paper raised as to how the Book of Poetry became an enduring "classic" across several millennia and how the Songs of Chu, despite having been also termed the Li Sao Classic, remained incapable of becoming a real "classic" and unable to enter the primary category in the traditional classification of "Classics, Histories, Philosophy or Anthology." Some scholars argued that this was because of the ebb and rise of the Jing-Chu and Yin-Zhou cultures, while other scholars believed that this proved that the Chinese culture, with a search for facts as its primary thrust, consistently rejected illusion and decoration.

Professor Andrew Plaks' paper[21] listed a large number of examples from Chinese, Japanese, Greek, and Hebrew literature to show that "parallelism" is a phenomenon which inevitably emerges at a given phase of literary development and which carries an air of universal regularity. In China especially, symmetry is not only employed in poetry but is also used in fiction and drama. He pointed out that critics of traditional Chinese drama often employ antithetical/parallel aesthetics which has developed from the archetypal concept of symmetry to discuss the architecture of drama, including things like "separation and union, sorrow and joy," "elegant and crude," "fantastic and realistic," or "active and passive."[22] In his view, the renowned opera The Peony Pavilion is a work which "is constructed on a grid of alternating scenes that contrast such qualities as elegance and crudeness, exquisite eroticism and low ribaldry, lyric stasis and narrative movement," and "a clearer sense of parallel construction within the author's design emerges when we consider

[20]Yu Baolin, "Wenji – jingdian – Zhongguo gudianshi" [Anthologies—Classic Works—Classical Chinese Poetry].

[21]"Where the Lines Meet: Parallelism in Chinese and Western Literature," see *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 10 (1–2) (July 1988), pp. 43–60. Also published in *Poetics Today* 11 (3) (Spring 1991), pp. 523–546.

[22]Ibid., p. 57.

the interpenetration of qualities that governs the succession of scenes in the play."[23] Not only are the titles of the chapters and sections of vernacular fiction symmetrical, but are also often composed of two balanced parts. Chinese critics of fiction stress even more frequently the criss-crossing osmosis of this type of antithetical/parallel architecture, such as Mao Zonggang's so-called "different branches on the same tree, different leaves on the same branch, different flowers on the same leaves, different fruit from the same flowers," or "singular peaks set in opposition, brocade screens looming face to face,"[24] and more, and even in terms of character creation, Chinese fiction also often employs parallel composition. For example, the antithetically constructed Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai.[25] These two parallel contrasting characters converge into the single entity "Jianmei" in the dream sequence in the fifth section of *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Even Pan Jinlian and Li Pinger,[26] Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie,[27] Cao Cao and Liu Bei[28] are also products of this same aesthetic principle. Professor Plaks also points out that the complementarity of the characters permeates the parallelism of the plot, resulting in an even more abstract contrast. For example, the nub of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is "the genuine and the fake/true or false," the nucleus of the fable of *Journey to the West* is "color and emptiness/space," and the balance between "waxing and waning" informs the principle architecture of *Jinpingmei*. He believes that "these concepts which at first glance appear antithetical" "ultimately give[s] way to a sense of interpenetration and complementarity, one that marks the final understanding of these masterworks as texts constructed on the model of dense webs of antithetical parallelism."[29] He argues that "antithesis" can be said to be a principle of Chinese literary composition.

In sum, many scholars agree that in the process of literary development there are many regular phenomena which repeatedly occur in both Chinese and foreign literature and that literary historians ought to specifically examine these phenomena, their transformation and development, and not employ a closed and ready-formed "objective law" to shroud everything.

How then should literary history be written? This conference advanced several valuable views, including such papers by Chinese scholars as: "Models of narration: from tradition to modernity in Chinese fiction" (Yue Daiyun), "Reception and cultural filtering" (Jin Siyan), "Alien legends—China through Western eyes" (Zhang Longxi), "The narrative structure of fiction: a comparative analysis of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, *Buddenbrooks*, and *The Forsyte Saga*" (Liu Xiangyu),

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., p. 59.

[25]Two characters from the novel *Dream of Red Mansions*.

[26]Characters from the classic novel *Jinpingmei*.

[27]Characters from the classic novel *Journey to the West*.

[28]Historical figures from the Han Dynasty and characters from the classic novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

[29]"Where the Lines Meet: Parallelism in Chinese and Western Literature," p. 60.

and "The world in the mirror and the world in dreams" (Ying Jinxiang), as well as "The fire phoenix: its origin, meaning and influence" (Xiao Bing) and "The circulation, result and meaning of motive force" (Sun Jingyao).

Literary history has in the past described the development of literary history largely from such aspects as contemporary social change, the changing dispositions of characters in a work or changes in an author's consciousness. The paper "Models of narration: from tradition to modernity in Chinese fiction" attempts to break through this pattern and analyze the division between China's traditional and modern fiction from such aspects of form as the development of "literariness" itself and how literature is expressed. The paper points out that China's traditional vernacular fiction has on the whole formed its own individual narrative pattern through its adoption of an omniscient narrative perspective, its series of time sequences, the unity of the author and the narrator, the objective and realistic narrative tone, the unity of the structure of sequential incidents and the narrative, and the layering of the narrative syntax. Meanwhile, modern fiction has adopted the hallmarks of Western fiction and there have been reformative changes to all the aspects outlined above. Liu Xiangyu's paper on the other hand further explored the differences in narrative structure between three novels from China, Germany, and the United Kingdom whose focus is the collapse of major households.

In the past, literary history has commonly undertaken a "periodic" analysis of literary development according to a time sequence. From the perspective of comparative literature, using the periodization methodology, literary history should go further and fashion a "cross-section of literature at a specific juncture in time." This specific juncture or "common moment" could always highlight clearly the richness and variety, differences and similarities, as well as the mutual influences and inter-permeation of works of the same period. Thus Professor Meng Erkang repeatedly stressed that "literary history must take on board the arguments of comparative literature." Zhang Longxi in his paper stressed the fact that we are situated at a critical juncture where we might potentially each transcend the boundaries and limitations of our own cultures. He drew on an extremely rich body of work to show that in the past, the image of China in the eyes of Westerners "was either idealistically utopian and alluring or an imagined space full of exotic overtones, or alternatively a country that was eternally stalled in a state of spiritual blindness and ignorance." He argued that "If we decide to expand the boundaries of our own cultural horizons and recognize the roots of humanity—and this is precisely the aim of comparative research into different cultures—then it is necessary to smash this 'alien' myth which runs counter to imagination." Thus "the other is no longer alien to the self, exotic, and impossible to explain, but rather able to be comprehended and to be adopted, finally able to constitute a commonly recognized part of our experience of the world." Many scholars believe that we are currently poised to stand at this elevation and, in the midst of the complex international cultural influences and common understandings and intertwinings, rewrite our literary history.

If we say that Zhang Longxi merely conducted his research from the point of view of principles, then Jin Siyan's paper discussed in specifics a bevy of questions

regarding "reception and cultural filters" in the period when the two literatures were in touch between 1920 and 1925, a period when China's new poetry experienced a transformation characterized by "expectancy." Sun Jingyao's paper spoke concretely about how China's long-held "this-worldly naturalistic viewpoint" clashed with the Buddhist teachings which arrived from abroad, and how through a process of "compromise, retreat and fusion," the distinctive charm of China's landscape poetry was born. Yin Jinxiang and Xiao Bing's papers both took a macro-literary approach with the former discussing the different uses of "mirror" and "dream" imagery in Chinese and Western literature, while the latter discussed the spread and transformation of mythological stories of great birds in the various countries of the world. These types of macro-observations will of necessity influence the writing of literary history into the future.

On the topic of the concrete writing methodology of literary history, attendees also offered some excellent suggestions. Professor Meng Erkang argued that literary history, like literature, can adopt Goethe's "three basic literary genres," namely lyric poetry, drama, and narrative literature. He argued: "I feel that China's literary history represents an outstanding example of the history of lyric literature, with its concise narrative, its vivid imagery, its metaphors and symbols—all of which is aimed at giving vent to the literary historian's emotions. A literary history that is full of debate can be said to be a dramatic literary history… and it is a relatively long-lived literary history with a narrative style." Professor Wang Zuoliang's paper "Pioneers of Literary History in Ancient China" also discussed the same question. With consummate erudition he discussed the first century of the current era's Book of Han: Art and Literature Gazetteer through to the appearance in the sixth century of *Shi pin* [Poetry Gradings][30] and *Wen xuan* [Literary Selection],[31] plus *Wenxin diaolong* [The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons] which advocated that "literature should reflect the changing order of society and politics," right up to Du Fu's "A Playful Quatrain and the thirty poems of Yuan Haowen's *Lun shi* [Poetry Review]." He argued that all of these can only be described as pioneers of literary history and that in a true sense, literary history only emerged in 1904. Professor Wang Zuoliang also raised a question that deserves serious consideration: Chinese people do not lack a sense of history. In fact, China's works of history belong to the ranks of the most outstanding internationally. Nor do Chinese lack an awareness of criticism… They have long possessed elements which were conducive to the development of literary history, including several works which approximated literary history. So "Why then, right up to the end of the nineteenth century, did literary history not ultimately appear in China"? Professor Wang offers an extremely interesting analysis of this question, but he obviously differs from Professor Meng Erkang on the concept of "literary history." Meng Erkang argues that it is a type of history of lyric literature whilst Professor Wang argues that it can only be seen as a type of "precursor" to literary history.

[30]Work by Zhong Rong (469–518), in which he evaluated the work of various poets.

[31]Also known as *Zhaoming wenxuan*, edited by Xiao Tong (lived 501 to 7 May 531).

Additionally, Johns Hopkins University's Professor Larzer Ziff's paper "On Writing the History of American Literature", the head of the Bonada Indian Studies Research Institute, Professor Barbara Miller's paper "On the question of authorship in the mythology and poetry of Sanskrit literature" as well as Timothy Reiss of New York University's paper "Literature—Politics—History", UCLA's Professor Peter Lee's "Ideology and the history of Korean literature" and others all offered, from different perspectives, very valuable ideas on the writing of literary history.

Since the discussion touched on China, Japan, India, Korea, America, and Europe, and because everyone approached the discussion from the basis of comparative literature, translation theory (which is a means of communication) inevitably caught the attention of everyone at the conference. Professor Eugene Eoyang from Indiana University's paper, "Reception aesthetics and translation" and Professor Lu Kanghua from Heilongjiang University's paper on Chinese translation theory both caught the interest of the participants.

In comparison with the first bilateral comparative literature conference which was convened in 1983 in Beijing, the preparations were relatively comprehensive, the discussion was relatively focused, the academic quality was higher, the past practice of not paying attention whilst others were reading their papers saw some improvement, and the papers presented at the conference initiated exchange and dialog on many topics. And it is no coincidence that this progress was achieved. This time in America, I felt that a deep transformation was occurring in America's literature research community. In the past, a great number of scholars who studied Eastern literature classed themselves as Sinologists. Apart from situating themselves in the comparative literature circles, they were little interested in the rapid development in literary theory that was occurring at the time. But now, a handful of prominent scholars of Eastern literary research are actively following these trends and are introducing these new theories into research on Chinese literature. What is more, they are going all out to link up the research on Chinese literature with that of other literatures. On another matter, in the past some scholars of literary theory believed that their work bore little relation to research on the East and so they were completely indifferent to research on the East. But now, they feel that if a certain theory can only be applied to Western literature and can only be explained using phenomena found in Western literature, then it is not a comprehensive and holistic theory and they would like their theories to also receive the imprimatur of Eastern literature as well. A group of distinguished literary theorists have already begun to express an interest in Eastern literature. In truth, the center of gravity of comparative literature is relatively rapidly turning from an internal Euro-centric mono-cultural comparison to a comparison between different cultural systems, like Sino-Western comparative literature.

Looking back at China's literary research community, it is obvious that tremendous changes are taking place. A number of people who are researching Chinese literature urgently need to break through the closed research system of the past and they feel deeply the necessity of establishing for themselves a frame of reference for foreign literature. Only with the broadest of backgrounds and with a complex matrix of pervading influence can the special character of one's own

ethnic literature be seen. On the other hand, scholars of foreign literature deeply feel that we cannot just follow foreigners when we are researching foreign literature. Professor Yang Zhouhan warned us repeatedly that people who study foreign literature especially, need to possess a Chinese soul. In other words, only if one studies foreign literature as a Chinese person will be able to pioneer a new level in foreign literature research and create unique value. And it is precisely awareness of this type that has spurred on the tremendous development that we have seen in Chinese comparative literature in recent years and which has led it to become a truly "prominent field."

All of the papers of this second Sino-U.S. Comparative Literature Symposium amply illustrate the changes in America's comparative literature circles as well as the advances in China's literary research circles. These changes and advances are inspiring and presages the fact that the next 1991 conference which will be held in China will certainly enter a more lofty and innovative academic realm. At the same time, it foreshadows the inevitable emergence, via the path of comparative literature, of a glorious future for Chinese and world literary research.

(In October 1987, Princeton, Indiana and Los Angeles successively convened the second Sino-U.S. Comparative Literature Symposium where questions relating to "History, Literature and Literary History" were intensively discussed. This article was first published in "Literature Review", Vol. 3, 1988.)

Chapter 8
Setting Out Again from Indigenous Literary Phenomena: A Preface to Stephen Owen's *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*

At the beginning of the 1990s, one question that I often pondered was how to effect a genuine "interaction" between the Chinese and Western literary discourses. How I understood "interaction" was, from the perspective of one culture, to understand and interpret another and thus in the tumult and illumination of another culture, create new elements and a new architecture. China's ancient poet Su Shi[1] said long ago: "From the side it's a mountain wall, from the end a single peak. Near, far, high, low—each view is different. I do not know Lu Mountain's true face, because I find myself in the mountain's midst."[2] What he meant was that the shape of a mountain always depends on the position of the person viewing the mountain and if people want to truly get a full view of the mountain, then they must stand aside from that mountain. However, how can we really find this kind of "point outside the mountain" in order to observe the massif, this "mountain" which Chinese literary discourse has found it so difficult to size up?

At the time, I also read some of Jurgen Habermas' work and felt that the "critique–engage–rebuild" path that he spoke of made a lot of sense. He believed that the establishment of any order or paradigm must commence with "taking a position." To take a position is to "set oneself boundaries" or in other words, to have certain rules. If you have no frontiers or borders, then it is impossible to establish a system or matrix. But as soon as a system is constructed, it is sealed and the act of sealing is the beginning of aging. The only way to resolve this contradiction is through engagement. In other words, find a frame of reference and in the light of this frame of reference, use a kind of "alien" ("non-self") or "unfamiliar" eye to reexamine oneself. Thus only one will be able to escape the "self-set boundaries" of the original system/paradigm, expand the self and take on and inhabit the new system/paradigm. This type of opening up and fusion is a critique of the original paradigm and at the same time it is a reconstruction of the original

[1]Su Shi (1037–1101), also known as Su Dongpo, a northern Song Dynasty writer and calligrapher.
[2]Translation taken from Ron Egan, *Word Image and Deed in the Lifeof Su Shi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

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D. Yue, *China and the West at the Crossroads*, China Academic Library,
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paradigm and the birth of a new one. The question is how to create this, as he terms it, "mutually subjective" result?

There is no doubt that both the Chinese and Western literary discourse are extremely mature paradigms. I think that if we all just chase our tails within our own respective paradigms, then it will be extremely difficult to have a breakthrough and be innovative. Assuming that we attempt to "blend" one type of paradigm into another, there is no way we can achieve a good outcome. I have studied carefully Professor Liu Ruoyu's "Chinese literary theory". This work begins from a Western literary paradigm and uses the Western metaphysical theory, determinist theory, expressionist theory, technique theory, esthetic appreciation theory, and functional theory as a framework to perform a comprehensive comparative analysis of China's literary discourse and it truly offers a significant number of theses that are well and truly worthy of consideration. However, as an article published in the 1990s and entitled "Actively enter the world cultural dialog with individuality and originality" opined: "If we only use a model that has been constructed by a foreign discourse to interpret and dissect our own native culture, then a great number of distinguishing and original cultural phenomena of the native culture may, because they do not conform to this model, be cast aside, resulting in that so-called world cultural dialog remaining no more than a monolog, incapable of achieving the aim of engagement and exchange." In China many works which attempt to use Western concepts to interpret Chinese literary discourse find it extremely difficult to transcend this limitation, resulting in the dissection and imposition of one paradigm by or on another and interaction is even more out of the question. How can this situation be altered such that through genuine interaction between Chinese and Western literary discourses both discourses might enter a completely new phase?

It appears that the most basic starting point must be changed and that we should not begin with any ready-formed paradigm, but rather we must return to the source and begin again from those literary phenomena from which that paradigm was developed. How exactly then should we proceed? How, through the interaction of Chinese and Western literary discourses, can we renarrate and reanalyze in a targeted manner the myriads of pieces of original materials that such a process would require? How can we identify a rational and clearly structured breach through which to initiate the project? After considering this over and over again, I was still unable to come up with a suitable strategy. It was faced with this type of quandary that I suddenly discovered Professor Owen's newly published A Chinese Literary Discourse Primer, which is in fact the now published Readings in Chinese Literary Thought: An English Translation with Commentary. This is the "textbook" that he used when he lectured in Chinese literary discourse to American graduate students.

It seems that Mr. Owen spared no effort in devising a suitable method of explaining to his American students China's literary discourse. He is not too enamored of Liu Ruoyu's method of dividing Chinese literary theory into several large sections according to the Western framework and then selecting a number of original texts as examples and adding an explanation. Nor is he satisfied with John Timothy Wixted's approach in his *Poems on Poetry: Literary Criticism by Yuan Hao-wen* of tracing back from an individual's work to the poems and literary

discussions of its source. Similarly, he is not satisfied with Pauline Yu's Reading China's Traditional Imagery which selects a core question and broadly links it up with all types of literary discourses in order to analyze a text deeply. Instead he has devised a fourth method which suggests that after resolutely selecting the latter of the two difficult propositions of "either seek coherence in the narrative, even at a cost of sacrificing some text," or "sacrifice coherence in order to preserve each unique piece of text," i.e., use the text to narrate the intent of the piece, and using only time as the thread, string together texts that would otherwise appear to have nothing to do with one another. His lectures adopted the same format: a passage in the original (Chinese), a passage of translation (English), followed by a detailed explanation (not a summary) of every word and sentence in the passage and an assessment of every question that is touched upon. This thus deftly and easily achieved a genuine textual approach. Starting from the actual text fundamentally changed the former notion of "drawing" from the text—or even the error of discarding a mass of extremely rich and lively textual material that does not fit neatly with the "notion" being explored. The approach resulted in the linguistic context that gave rise to the text, along with certain unique contents of the text that had long been obscured, or even certain fractures which the author had attempted to conceal, all being vividly revealed in front of the reader.

The thing that excited me most was that after years of searching, I felt that I had finally discovered a pathway that was capable of breaking through the Sino-Western literary discourse paradigm and through interaction and "bi-directional exposition," develop a new way of thinking and a new architecture. I immediately set Owen's Primer as a basic text for our graduate class' "Comparative Poetics" course and required the students to study every word and every sentence in class. The course was composed of three steps. The first step was to read thoroughly the English translations of all of the literary discourse passages selected by Professor Owen and from such aspects as vocabulary, terminology, mode of expression and meaning, identify what differences there are between the translation and our previous understanding and the understandings of previous Chinese scholars. The second step was the students required to translate into Chinese every discussion that Professor Owen conducted about each piece of literary discourse, study these in detail and in our tutorials, describe their personal opinions from the past and their current personal opinion, and compare them. The third step was, during the tutorial (including the Masters and Ph.D. students in the Comparative Literature Research Institute as well as some specialist graduate students from the Chinese Department) to open up a wide-range of discussion. Both Comparative Poetics courses (one course per year) that I convened employed the same method and the participants were unanimous in their belief that they benefited greatly. I personally also learned a lot, and I think this was due to the following three reasons:

First: Having discovered from the Western literary discourse, this external linguistic realm, a new perspective and angle, then we can, like viewing Mount Lu from a vantage point some distance removed from the mountain itself, examine and interpret anew China's traditional literary discourse with which we have been

familiar for so long. Professor Owen is a Harvard University Professor. He won this distinction through studying Chinese and is one of the very few American academics who have done so. He has an especially solid grounding in Western culture, an extremely keen appreciation of literature, and a very high level of academic achievement in the fields of traditional Chinese culture and Chinese literature. His observation and interpretation of Chinese literary discourse has obviously taken shape naturally and interactively against a background of Western literary discourse. For example, the Primer declares at the outset that the first section to be discussed in the first chapter is the Analects of Confucius: "He said: Look to how it is. Consider from what it comes. Examine in what a person would be at rest. How can a person remain hidden?—How can someone remain hidden?"[3] As far as I am aware, the vast majority of selections of literary discourse, histories of literary discourse, and histories of literary criticism rarely cite or analyze this quotation from Confucius. Why does Owen lay so much stress on this quotation right from the outset, and then proceed to analyze it in a lengthy treatise? I think that it is because, as he says, in Western theory, mimesis, or re-presentation are both composed of a binary structure comprising the original object and what is being copied/emulated or the original object and what is being re-presented, whereas what Confucius suggests in fact is a three-stage process of knowing an object, and the Western binary structure has indeed provided a new perspective and angle with which to investigate China's special cognitive methodology. Without the former for comparison, no special sensitivity or interest would be created in the latter.

Second: In the many and repeated bidirectional interpretations between Western and Chinese literary discourses, a type of interaction can be engendered which lead us to discover, or perhaps we should say "release [to the world]" a considerable number of hitherto unrecognized new unique characteristics of Chinese and Western literary discourse. For example, from the quote given above, Professor Owen further discusses the difference between the points of departure of the Chinese and Western literary discourses. He points out that Plato emphasized how brief, changing, and random, yet concrete phenomena can express concepts of eternity, immutability, and freedom. In other words, the world's outward appearance is deceptive and preexisting absolute truth is hidden behind that deceptive appearance. The Greek word for "poetry" (pioêma) comes from the root "to make" (piein), meaning that poetry is meant to take the "concept/idea" which is hidden within what "already exists" and "fashion" it and render it capable of being known. On the other hand, what Confucius emphasized was not some "inner," "pre-existing," immutable object. Instead, he begins with "man" and first examines what a man really is, and then looks at how he became like this. And finally, he examines where he is situated and thus reveals his purpose, motivation, and desires. If we say that Western literary discourse tends to lead man to know an "already existing" concept (philosophy), then Confucius's teachings lead a person to know a living and changing human being. In this process, "knowing the subject" and

[3]*Analects*, II: 10. Translation from Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (1992), p. 19.

"knowing the object" are continually changing, and the result of knowing is not a static, "ready formed" (Things become) object, but rather an object that is formed in context, an ever-changing "yet to be formed" (Things becoming) object. Professor Owen argues that "Chinese literary thought is in fact developed around this question of 'knowing.'" "It invokes a type of special interpretive philosophy—a philosophy whose meaning resides in revealing the multitudinous and complex preconditions for man's words and actions just as Western literary though is founded on 'poetics' (i.e. discussing the concept of poetry through the composition of poetry)." Professor Owen continues: "China's traditional poetics was born of Chinese people's focus on this type of interpretive philosophy; whilst the West's literary interpretive philosophy has its roots in its own poetics." According to my understanding, these two statements mean that China's poetics reveals clearly certain innermost desires (that which has been arrived at 所安) because it approaches the question from the external conditions (that have given rise to them 所以) and historical precedents (that have led up to them), whereas traditional Western theory begins with the essence (rational kernel) that inevitably exists within all phenomena, and from that, proceeds to gradually analyze how the phenomenon was formed (created) and how it could have been thus formed. Speaking broadly, what the Western philosophical system stresses is the absolute spirit, the confirmed and constant rationality that exists above and beyond all phenomena, while what Chinese philosophy has traditionally stressed is: "Something formless yet complete," arguing that, due to a range of opportunities/destinies, all phenomena in the world aggregate to form a kind of reality that is forged through an untold number of ever-changing interactive relationships and amidst undetermined and inexhaustible possibilities. This is the so-called "non-existent entity." Professor Owen believes that within the dissimilar Chinese and Western literary discourse traditions, "that which was their original focus determined their later changes." The two traditions both seek to discover things that are hidden beneath the surface, but because of the abovementioned differences in departure points, the two streams of literary thought also parted ways. From the above examples we can see that bidirectional exposition between different linguistic contexts has meant that special characteristics that in the past had long been held to be common are seen in a new light, the so-called "Harmony and Homogeneity." This type of mutual acknowledgment, recognition and illumination in diversity and mutual permeation and mutual supplementation where possible will obviously develop and open up a boundless and broad road into the future.

Third: There is one more point about Professor Owen's course material that delighted me and that is how he consistently intersperses his intricate personal readings of the materials with the opinions of traditional and modern scholars, and naturally carries his personal research experience with Chinese poetry into his interpretation of the theoretical text. He is also specifically mindful of giving voice to those things that traditional literary discourse and traditional literary history research finds it impossible to cover or resolve but which have tremendous potential in terms of being a driving force. He quotes Liu Xie's words to say that what makes the Shuo Wen so perfect is that it can "fix gaps seamlessly" and so we should

precisely look at the fact that the text itself is a process of "stitching fragments together and mending the gaps." Only when we notice these traces of stitching and mending are we able to understand the genuinely vibrant thinking of the author at the time of his creation and achieve Mencius' so-called "understanding language." These kinds of examples can be found with ease all throughout the *Primer*, and they are especially prominent in *The Poetic Exposition on Literature,*[4] *Twenty-four Poetic Criticisms*, and the *Canglang Remarks on Poetry* sections as well as the discussions of Wang Fuzhi.

In conclusion, the *Primer* itself is an outstanding and model example of bidirectional exposition, mutual acknowledgment, and recognition and mutual illumination between the Chinese and Western literary discourses. We undertook a word by word and phrase by phrase study of Professor Owen's teaching materials 2 years running with our two graduate student cohorts. During those years, one of our graduate students wrote his own Master's thesis with the subject being what he gleaned from reading Professor Owen's *Primer* and from a discussion with Professor Owen, and in fact the student was in direct contact with Professor Owen. She is now currently at America's University of Ohio continuing her studies on the same theme and working towards her Ph.D. Another talented student in the cohort of those years, Mr. Wang Yugen, gained entrance into Harvard University and became one of Professor Owen's favorite students. Yet another talented student, Ms Wang Bohua is the principal translator of this work. She won some funding to support her as a visiting scholar for 18 months and, under Professor Owen's direct supervision, completed this rare translation. Wang Bohua threw herself into the translation work assiduously, and revised it many times. It should be said that the translator of this book truly belongs to the crème de la crème of the translating world.

I remember a lecture that Mr. Qian Zhongshu once gave at an academic conference in Italy in which he especially emphasized innovation and opposed "blindly worshipping data." In opposing "equating literary studies with textology" he argued that we must liberate ourselves from the repetitiveness of inexhaustible and ceaseless data and devote ourselves to theoretical research and innovation. He deftly pointed out the sticking point in our scholarly research circles. This book of Professor Owen, whilst its title mentions interpretation, is at the same time an extremely creative theoretical work, the like of which has never been seen before. I am convinced that it will, from a new starting point, propel the entire literary discourse research enterprise in the direction of innovation. Now this rare and meticulous masterpiece from the 1990s of the last century is being respectfully presented to the broad Chinese readership. I firmly believe that no matter whether it be researchers of literary theory, of world literature, Chinese literature, or Chinese literary discourse, young or old, traditional or modern, all will certainly be inspired by the work.

[4]Title translation taken from Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Harvard and London: Council on East Asian Studies, 1992), p. 73.

Chapter 9
For an Active, Holistic Life: Preface to *A Collection of Wai-Lim Yip's Poetry and Prose*

Ye Weilian/Wai-lim Yip (1937–) has been called by the famous American poet Jerome Rothenberg "The linking figure between American modernism… and Chinese traditions and practices". He writes poetry as well as research treatises. He is a renowned poet as well as a distinguished theoretician. He is extremely "new," consistently placing himself in the vanguard of the very latest literary trends and theories. He personally made his name through writing modernist poetry and consistently promoted avant-garde art and he practiced what he preached. He was also very "old," spending all of his life loitering through the landscape of Chinese poetics, Daoist aesthetics, and Chinese classical verse, and making an outstanding contribution. As he says himself:

> For a lively nature and lively, holistic life, a life full of initiative, self-sufficient and natural, I research and write for liberation from the confines of a square frame and for a lively, holistic life.

Ye Weilian was born in 1937 in Zhongshan in Guangdong, a little hamlet on the coast. As he himself says: "My childhood consisted of interminable days and unforgettable solitary blue skies filled with artillery fragments and hunger." Later he studied in Hong Kong and Taiwan of China, and then continued his studies in the United States where he was awarded a Masters in Aesthetics from the University of Iowa and a Doctorate in comparative literature from Princeton. From 1967 onwards, he took up a position at the University of California at San Diego where he remains today. In the past 30 years or more, he has already occupied the chair of Dean of the School's Department of Comparative Literature and in 1970 and 1974 he returned to Taiwan to participate in the establishment of a doctoral program in comparative literature. In 1980 and 1982, he also traveled to Hong Kong to occupy the position of founding professor of the English Language Department at a local university and assisted in the establishment of an Institute of Comparative Literary Research at that university. During this period, the graduate students of comparative literature, modern literature, and Chinese poetics that he tutored spread across Hong Kong and Taiwan of China and the United States.

Master Ye's influence on the mainland was also extremely extensive. In 1981, at the beginning of the "cultural fever" phenomenon, Ye Weilian came to Peking

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University for the first time and gave a lecture on comparative literature. The lecture was held in the auditorium of the administrative building which could hold over 800 guests and the audience spread across the stage and out the door, so well attended was the lecture! It should be said that this was an extremely successful and bountiful sowing. Now, comparative literature has blossomed and taken root at Peking University as a newly rising discipline. Peking University has already established a comprehensive Masters-Ph.D.-Postdoctoral program in comparative literature. Comparative literature has already become a key discipline at the university and has received strong state backing. The twenty-first century will also see it undergo priority development. Looking back, it must be said that Ye Weilian's lecture was a truly innovative beginning. In the last twenty years, Ye Weilian's principal works on comparative literature have been compiled on the mainland as *In Search of Common Rules of Literature Beyond the Cultures of China and the West* (edited by Wen Rumin and published by Peking University Press), his *Chinese Poetics* has been republished on the mainland many times (by the Joint Publishing Company), his poetry has also been edited by Yang Kuanghan, a researcher in the Literary Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences as *Selected Poems of Ye Weilian* and widely distributed across the mainland. Many of his works published in Taiwan, and especially the multivolume set *The Comparative Literature Series* that he selected and edited in the 1980s, has become a common reference tool on the desks of many scholars of comparative literature and literary theory on both sides of the Taiwan straits.

In 1998, Ye Weilian was a keynote speaker in a series of lectures in Peking University's Department of Comparative Literature and he responded to many invitations to visit Peking University where he gave many lectures on the topic "Daoist aesthetics and Western culture" with his lecture notes forming No. 17 in the *Peking University Scholarly Lecture Series* and published by Peking University Press. The outstanding feature of this lecture was how Ye Weilian raised the question of the preservation of the cultural ecology up to the level of the protection of the natural ecology and analyzed it, beginning from the current climate of globalization and exhibiting a deep concern for the humanities. He pointed out that the "cultural industry" that virtually covers the globe, steeped in materialism and commodification, plans cultural activities according to the principles of the market, tailor-making culture according to the demands of consumption. It redirects the profit motive into the cultural domain and reproduces monotonous and standardized cultural products on a massive scale. And during this process, the value of man is reduced to the level of the exchange value of a commodity, where "utility is king," and "looking at a tree and only seeing timber." The result is that multitudes of soulless "economic men" are produced and the unique living sentiments and cultural spaces of different cultures disappear until there is practically nothing left. Following the disappointing large-scale devastation of the natural ecology, mankind is gradually marching toward spiritual isolation and multicultural demise. In order to alleviate this danger, Ye Weilian returned to the Chinese philosophy of the past and especially to research into Daoist aesthetics, pointing out the important path of the Daoists' "eliminate the hindrance of language" and "set the prisoner of the heart

free." In other words, eliminate linguistic hegemony in order to allow the self to retreat from its domineering role and allow nature to recover its "original form" allowing "man to follow the laws of nature," reviving a robust holistic life of mutual participation, complementation, recognition, and exposure between the self and objects and, perhaps, rescuing humanity's cultural ecology. His lectures evoked a major response and this obviously opened up a new page in the development of China's comparative literature and comparative culture.

Ye Weilian is first and foremost a poet, and a modern poet at that. Whilst still in his teens, Master Ye was extremely passionate about analyzing poetry and poetic creation. From 1955 to 1961 when he was in Taiwan to study, he had already written many Chinese and English poems which he published in such magazines as *Modern Literature*, *Genesis*, and *New Tide*. In 1963, he took part in Iowa University's poetry creating workshop, translated and edited *A Selection of Modern Chinese Poetry*, and in that same year published his first volume of poetry, *Fugue*. Later he consecutively published a multivolume poetry collection, including *Pensive Crossing*, *On the Verge of Waking*, *A Tale of Wild Flowers*, *The Sound of Flowers Blooming*, *The Legend of the Pine Lark*, *Selected Poems of Three Decades*, *Galloping in Fear*, *Unending Crossings*, and *Moving into Middle Age.* Some of these poems had won several awards and in 1979 he was named one of Taiwan's ten prominent poets.

The majority of Master Ye's poetic compositions were replete with sentiments of nostalgia for his birthplace and the anguish of exile. As he himself says, moving from the mainland to Taiwan, China, and then to America, it was impossible not to feel disassociated from a specific space or to highlight feelings of nostalgia for one's hometown, of pining for an era, and the perplexity and confusion of spiritual exile. However, everything he wrote was certainly not shallow nostalgia. From beginning to end, his work is steeped in themes of searching and pursuit, drifting, consternation, and conquering exile. As one mainland critic noted: "His lamentations, interrogations, hidden emotions, narrative and analysis does not stop at a uni-directional venting of emotions, but rather striving for the mutual active choices and new discoveries that exist between space-time and experience, life and thought, language and the poet." (Yang Kuanghan: Preface to *Selected Poems of Ye Weilian*). Consequently, we see in his poetry incessant exploration and yearning, "the pursuit of long-lasting happiness is itself an eternal quest, one which relies on suffering wings" (*The Search*), and it also evinces feelings of pride and gratitude toward a mighty civilization: "The earth harbors memories of successes and failures; we are the largest canon in the world. We are the offspring of the broad plains; we are the grand spirit of the lofty mountains…" (*Fugue*).

Clearly, Master Ye's early poetry is relatively Westernized and very similar to the poetry of the Western modernists. His poems develop along the "prose-fiction" route of the post-May Fourth new poetry and emphasize narrative and analysis. However, these poems are not all lineally analytic and narrative, but rather strive to achieve complex and multilayered means of expression, seeking fresh personal insights into objects and striving to dismantle the general limitations on time and space. At the very least, they seek a type of "observation slightly removed from everyday life" and like Bian Zhilin and He Qifang, tend toward a type of

"spellbindedness," "brooding," even a "dreamlike state." At the same time, he was constantly exploring the possibility of configuring a type of new compact between Western and Chinese traditional modes of display. For example, his renowned work *Fugue*, from the point of view of overall structure, clearly uses a Western symphonic means of expression, however, many images in the poem bear a close relationship with Chinese traditional poetry. None of these can be separated from the overtones of Chinese traditional poetry and this lent his poetry a certain Eastern flavor in his pursuit of pure modernism.

As Ye Weilian delved deeper and deeper into research on comparative literature and culture, his grasp of Western and Chinese poetic traditions became even more penetrating and more conscious. As a scholar poet and a poetic scholar, he noted: "What I face is an extremely complex landscape. It is a blend of East and West and there are clashes from two directions." But the Chinese portion clearly became stronger and stronger. He increasingly tended toward "A preference for shorter sentences, simpler images, and a hope that by employing simpler images [he] would be able to achieve a complex outcome and avoid using the previous complicated method of treatment." He attempted to break through the mental paralysis of the past and pitch himself toward landscape and trees, striving to meld into the tranquil and simple life of China's poetic tradition, seeking the "the extremely pithy ambience and impact" of China's ancient poetry. In terms of language, he attempted to use the intensity of the classical language to counterbalance the diffuse nature of the vernacular. He revered the language of Li Bai's lyric *yuefu* poetry and believed that it was a type of colloquialized voice whilst also being a comparatively refined language. Personally, he "Probably after fashioning a language midway between the vernacular and the classical language… went on to adjust the popular language on this basis" (Preface to *Ye Weilian—A Self-Selection*).

In sum, Ye Weilian's poetry increasingly stressed strings of unrelated yet juxtaposed imagery, and a pursuit of the echoing of external form and internal emotion, striving to reveal, through a comprehensible poetic milieu, a mass of primal emotion. It also employed a telepathic methodology to reveal flashes of multifaceted insight, blending the explicable with the as yet inexplicable objects, stimulating the reader to use his/her imagination to participate in the comprehension and squaring up of the poetic space, persisting in his attempt at "mute solitariness" and using the strategy of an architecture of intersecting imagery and acoustics to smash the solitary narrative, leading to an amalgam of "classical" and "vernacular" expressions which are periodically peppered with ancient phraseology in order to evoke a "classical echo" to his modern poetry (see Yang Kuanhan's *Selected Poems of Ye Weilian: a Preface*). His poetry brims with a dense poetic flavor of China's classics, wedded to China's modernist poetic legacy of the 1930s and 1940s and channeling the expressive strategies of the West since symbolism, to form his own unique poetic flavor. From the vantage point of philosophy and aesthetics, he devoted his whole life to the avid pursuit of a strategy for the convergence of Chinese and Western poetics and the art of poetry. In this regard, his poetic creation established a generational poetic style which was not always perfect but which perpetuated the cadence of Chinese poetry of several millennia, following on from

Bian Zhilin and He Qifang and enabling Chinese modernist poetry to occupy a place on the world's poetic stage. Additionally, his contribution to the translation of poetry should be mentioned. His English translations of China's classical poetry, like Wang Wei and highlights from classical Chinese literature, offer a kind of free floating vision which has inspired Western poets, given them pause and altered some of their expression strategies. The Chinese translation of his English poems, like *Wilderness* and *All the Trees Sing*, has precipitated new breakthroughs in terms of vision and technique in Taiwan's new poetry. In his English poetry, he has even created a type of lively grammar which is capable of aligning the Chinese and Western cultural horizons and has planted a solitary standard in the tide of American modern poetic grammar innovation as advocated by such renowned contemporary American poets as Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, Orson Welles, Kathleen M. Coleman and G. Snyder. It should be said that his poetry itself is a practical example of successful intercultural creation.

In his earlier poetic creations, Ye Weilian consistently pursued a convergence of Chinese and Western poetic arts and at the beginning of his academic career he naturally did not hesitate to throw himself into the study of comparative literature. When analyzing his motivation for entering the field of comparative literature research, Master Ye pointed out that his most important motivation was poetic composition. He said that because he did not distinguish between Chinese and foreign in the poetry that he read, he could not avoid making a few discoveries in terms of difference and similarity: "Why should we stop at one thousand types of rules and laws of poetry! Behind every rule or law lies its own aesthetic meaning. Therefore, I gradually discovered that many realms and flavors of Chinese poetry which had been formed with distinctive grammar could not be grasped with English grammar. It could not be presented using the vernacular language which was overlaid with Western linguistic overtones. My extreme amazement concealed my determination to later explore the hidden meaning of China's traditional aesthetics." Another motivation was to translate poetry: "How to adjust the structure of language A so as to reflect the context of language B? It was thoughts like these that spurred me to move from perfunctory comparative literature activities into investigative comparative literature research." Ye Weilian believes that he is a legatee of the May Fourth literary revolution and that the May Fourth itself is an issue for comparative literature. "Figures from the May Fourth period and scholars who research the literature since May Fourth all need, to varying degrees, to choose between two cultures in terms of how they mobilize their thoughts, the sequence of their expression and the objects that they present, and arrive at some degree of verification and agreement." As a "child of May Fourth" and a modern literary author, his entry into the comparative literature domain was inevitable.

Master Ye's research into comparative literature began with a quest for common rules of literature and common principles of aesthetics. He strove to identify some "questions arising from the common principles of aesthetics and then to use these identical features or approximations to corroborate the possibility for intercultural aesthetic amalgamation." However, from the very beginning, he was quite vigilant and noted that we must never use "the insipid 'universal' to annihilate the

'particular' which is as rich as honey," and not only must we not "only seek similarities and discard differences," but we must "recognize commonality through difference and spurn absence to achieve substance" to the point where "alike and different are all recognized and history and aesthetics are completely merged." On this foundation he proposed for the first time the widely influential theory of "the application of a mold in East-West comparative literature."

The mold (pattern) is a conceptual style. It is a type of compositional energy. For example as Ye Weilian put it, the Western pattern of thought under the alphabetic system tends toward a narration of abstract ideas, toward fragmentation into lineal pursuit and develops through deductive logic, whereas the Chinese pattern tends toward a visual composition, taking into consideration an object's specific appearance, capturing the subtleties of the multiple relationships in the space where the object occurs and uses compound imagery to provide a holistic environmental methodology to reveal an abstract concept. This type of explanation is unavoidably rather absolute, however, at the same time, he points out that no mold is immutable, and it is especially erroneous to use the pattern of one culture to smother that of another. If one wishes to seek out the "similarities" between two cultures, you must first begin from the standpoint of the culture itself and "understand both commonality and difference," and then will you be able to identify the overlapping and intersecting features of both cultures. He argues that this type of overlapping and intersection is often most clearly expressed in literary and artistic practice and people can invariably discover certain supra-cultural and heterogeneous powers of aesthetic perception that rise above the confines of language in a work of literature. In a different essay, *The Convergence of Classical Chinese and Anglo-American Poetry*, he enumerates several points of convergence in Chinese classical poetry and Anglo-American modern poetry that are capable of finding resonance: for example using nonanalytical and nondeductive methods of expression to seek the direct and concrete performance of an object; using an indeterminate flexible grammar and meaning to deliver multilayered subtle overtones; using the reductive, even divisive, function of a linking intermediary to promote the independence, specificity, and intense visual nature of an object; not following a linear logical pursuit but inclining toward a multi-linear progression in order to effect a multifaceted examination and contemporaneous advance; to bring about a simultaneous emergence of a visual event through 'timeification' of space and spatialization of time in order to create a cursive and sculptural prominence, and more. Ye Weilian points out that if we compare two cultural molds like two circles, then the aspects mentioned above are the overlapping and intersecting sections and the relationship between the two circles is not that of one circle covering up the other, nor is it a matter of occasional mutual dissection.

Quite a number of articles that Ye Weilian collected in his *Comparative Poetics* use, on the whole, similar methodologies to attempt a thoroughgoing analysis of China's Daoist aesthetics from within the linguistic context of contemporary American aesthetics. His research smashes through the inherent temporal and cultural boundaries and whilst comparing and combining it with Western culture, he renders China's ancient wisdom relevant to the present. On the one hand, he

offers a new perspective and frame of reference that has never been seen before with which Western aesthetics is able to see itself anew, whilst on the other hand offering China's aesthetics itself a renovated path to expanded enquiry. These innovative achievements of his rebutted those scholars who argued that there was no way to undertake comparison or convergence between unlike cultures and opened up a new path for subsequent intercultural literary research.

Ye Weilian's 1988 publication of his second collection of articles on comparative literature, *History*, *Hermeneutics and Aesthetics* proved that his ideas approached that of the times and had made new progress. In this collection of articles he especially emphasizes "interdisciplinary synthesis." He argues that Euro-America's literary theory of the past decade or more "Blended or connected aesthetics, philosophy, history and language." It is virtually impossible to find a piece of pure research that focused solely on literature for the sake of literature. Almost all of them are "literary theorists." On this basis he goes on to probe the fact that "No matter which group offers criticism, none of them is able to avoid a tendency towards hermeneutics" and proclaims that he is currently trying hard "to identify a Chinese hermeneutics foundation from China's classical literature, philosophy, language and history." He believes that Sino-Western comparative literature should be a kind of "candidness," "openness to one another," "listening to each other" branch of learning and that it must incorporate some divergent views and excludes others. It must include traditional and modern dialogs and articulate some "things about the present." Not only must it engage both China and the world, but it must string together the ancient and the modern, and "only with a completely open dialog methodology will it be possible to achieve a 'convergence' of the different 'realms.'"

If we say that in the past he paid comparatively more attention to research into that part of the two cultures that overlap or intersect, then his interest currently is focused on how, in a completely open dialog between the ancient and modern, China and the world, can a language of equitable interaction be found. In other words, what he is mindful of is not only that portion of the two circles that intersect and overlap, but he is seeking a much larger circumference, and within this circumference how it is possible "from a diffuse center, to exchange, cross-reference and invent." In other words, not only is it possible to adopt things from each other, but also, with the new perspective offered by the other side, through mutual observation and "respectful attention toward one another," create a new self-awareness. In the series of articles after this, he strove to find, in the intercultural hermeneutic matrix, the source of the formation of "premonition" (also translated "prior knowledge") of each individual cultural system (the specific history and linguistic culture derived from observation, sensing, thought formation, diction, the transmission of meaning, interpretation, and more) as well as, what new objects could be discovered and what mutual unknowns could be revealed in a mutual conversation between them. His famous thesis *Secret echoes and parallel cognizance—the production of and interaction between literary meanings* is a good example of his efforts in this respect.

This article is obviously an exploration of "literary meaning" in the linguistic context of modern Western hermeneutics. However he does not use the framework of Western hermeneutics to seek out materials in Chinese culture that might tally

with this. Rather he retreats to the source of his own culture to search for the threads of its development. In reality, in the field of literature, the appearance of every word and its meaning are multilayered and polysemous. The commentaries furnished with Chinese poetry represent the symphony that is audible to the annotator. "It represents the sum total of all the sounds, proclivities and poetic forms that the poet's soul experienced at the moment of creation." The first theoretician in China to point out this type of act of aesthetic perception was Liu Xie who, in his *The Recondite and the Conspicuous* chapter, pointed out: "The recondite, as a form, suggests ideas which are beyond linguistic expression and are comprehended indirectly through abstruse overtones, which unobtrusively reveal hidden beauty. This creation of meaning may be compared to the practice of forming a new hexagram by realigning the lines of another, or recalling how rivers contain pearls and jade."[1] The notions that Liu Xie traced right back to the *Book of Changes* prove that neither words nor sentences carry a "dead meaning" which can be encircled and contained, but rather they open the way to the behaviors of a variety of preexisting symphonies, tapestries, and layers of meaning. This actually links China's traditional ideology on unspeakability with theory of ambiguity that contemporary Western linguistics, which has been born of tradition, stresses. Thus, beginning from the concrete details of each individual culture, and undertaking a mutual and interactive dialog on the same specific question, and through that dialog, gradually forming a "discourse" of mutual understanding and respect and not mutual subversion and force, building a new "rules of the game," this is obviously the road that must be followed if we are to effect a linking and integration of the Chinese and the foreign, ancient and modern cultures.

Ye Weilian is not a complacent and self-satisfied scholar who is happy to cruise in a scholarly domain which he has already designed and built. All along he has pioneered and probed new domains and has achieved new results. His *The Birth of Chinese Modernist Painting—A Conversation with Contemporary Artists* is a unique work which begins with the personal experience of an artist and studies, in the cross-hairs of contemporary international art and China's traditional art, the special characteristics of the form of China's contemporary painting. Ye Weilian believes that China's modern painting had developed for many years and has already achieved a definite individual appearance and style. It also has its own distinct take on the integration of Chinese and Western tradition. There is a need for a book which evaluates and draws conclusions on the pedigree of China's contemporary art development, the strategic base and origin of aesthetic theory, the generation and evolution of the various artistic styles and the socio-cultural environment created by China's contemporary painting, and more. In this *Conversation* his broad reading and meticulous study of China and the world's art history and the leading works of art of the various schools can be seen. He regularly frequented all manner of exhibition spaces, seeking out the post-exhibition reviews and disputes,

[1]Translation from *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, trans. by Vincent Yu–chung Shih. New revised edition (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2015), p. 283.

and maintaining close personal relations with quite a number of distinguished painters. In his penetrating dialog with Zhao Wuji et al., nine contemporary famous Chinese artists, he repeatedly probed how their works were created within the tide of contemporary Western painting and also how exactly they were nurtured by China's poetry and artistic tradition and how they were able to express Chinese culture so strongly. The international discipline of comparative literature very early on made intercultural literary research an important and integral part of itself. However, in China, the fruits of this are still very scant. This book of Master Ye's both discusses the Sino-Western pan-artistic tradition as well as pan-poetic, aesthetic, historical, and linguistic disciplinary research. His personal interviews with and questions to the nine artists in particular recorded the thoughts that these artists enunciated directly and bequeathed to us some extremely precious data.

Entering the 1990s, Ye Weilian's research focus and interest again gradually turned to postmodernist investigations. The collection of essays, *Reading the Modern and the Postmodern: Meditations on Living Spaces and Cultural Spaces* explores his thoughts on these questions. The postmodern, postmodernists or postmodernism are of necessity an ambiguous, complex, and relatively difficult concept to define. From a comparison between the modern and the postmodern, as well as the developmental transition from the modern to the postmodern, Ye Weilian illustrates the phenomenon of the postmodern, making his elaboration of these phenomena relatively unequivocal and clear. What is especially interesting is that he points out some of the tenets of the postmodernists, such as the spatialization of time, the coexistence of multiple perspectives and time dimensions, the independence, and a strong awareness of the visuality of objects, an immediacy, and a transcendence and shattering of grammar, etc., and their advocacy of "Eastern thought (like Daoism and Buddhism), which surprisingly appeared very early before it could be baptized by industry, as well as oral culture." For this reason he notes: "In literary and artistic research, the network of production and change of one culture cannot be the final arbiter of all literature and art; cross-cultural research indicates a starting point that is even more worthy of contemplation. The things that are regarded as marginal in culture A might be cherished as core values in culture B… And given a sudden opportunity, depending on different historical imperatives, positions could even be reversed." Therefore the question, can "pre-modern" Chinese philosophical culture provide a reference for "post-modern" Western philosophical culture and could the two mutually blend, has become an extremely worthwhile question for reflection and research.

Master Ye Weilian marched onto the Chinese poetic stage at the age of 18, shouldering the burden of the May Fourth new cultural tradition, then absorbed the additional pulse of China's 1930s and 1940s modernist poetry, initiated a generation of Taiwan's modernist poetic stylists, and has continued to write poetry to this very day. The impulse to create, his sensitivity to the written language, and his unique insight as a poet, determined his irreplaceable scholarly research flare. His contributions to Chinese Daoist aesthetics, classical Chinese poetics, comparative literature, and Sino-Western comparative poetics are unsurpassed to this day. His critique of China's modern fiction and modern poetry is also meticulous, thought-provoking, and extremely creative.

Chapter 10
Connecting China, Russia, and the West; Synthesizing Literature, History, and Philosophy: Preface to *Foreign Writers and Chinese Culture*

In the first half of the 1990s, the scholars of comparative literature at Peking University and Nanjing University jointly edited the series *Chinese Literature Abroad* (published by Huacheng Publishing House). The great French comparative literature master Professor René Etiemble, in order to commemorate this pioneering effort, personally wrote a Preface to the series and in the Preface mentioned a very interesting incident. He said that on one occasion, when he was lecturing on France's nineteenth century literary movement at the University of Paris, after the lecture he explained to his students that all articles that he used as references and examples were taken from Chinese literature. Professor Etiemble described their reaction as follows: "All attendees were taken aback at what I said. I felt that in acting this way I could show how stupid and despicable it was for those people to discuss 'yellow-skinned people' in such an arrogant manner!" He confirmed unambiguously how extremely valuable it was to study the influence of Chinese literature and culture on foreign literature and culture. It was a lesson rich in potential! It is such a shame that Professor Etiemble passed away last year and was unable to witness personally how the truth that he had elucidated so eloquently and the realm that he had pioneered is being received so enthusiastically day by day and the fruits that it is bearing!

It should be said that there is a huge new leap between *Chinese Literature Abroad* and *Foreign Writers and Chinese Culture*. This cannot be divorced from the raising of the level of comparative literary research and the expansion of the comparative literature horizons over the past several years. Looking back over the research on the relationship between Chinese and foreign literature over the past 100 years of the twentieth century, we can probably identify the following several genres: certain foreign writers in China; certain Chinese writers abroad; the influence and dissemination of certain foreign tides of thought in China; the reinterpretation of China's literary theories and works against the backdrop of certain foreign literary works and theories; probing the different readings of Chinese and foreign literature on certain common questions; research on translation as a bridge between Chinese and foreign literature, etc. However, in general, the number of

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treatises that systematically study the influence of Chinese culture and literature on foreign literature or those that study the influence on Chinese literature of foreign culture and literature is indeed very small. The first to set the tone was probably "the Influence of the Teachings of Confucius and Mencius on German Youth" which was carried in *Xue Heng* magazine in 1926 and "Goethe and Chinese culture" which was carried in *Fiction Monthly* in 1927. These two articles were both written by foreigners, but they excited the interest of Chinese. Close behind them was Mr. Chen Shouyi's three articles "*The Orphan of Zhao* in 18th Century European Literature," "Robinson's View on Chinese Culture" , and "Chinese Gardens in 18th Century Europe" which were published sequentially from 1929 to 1931 by the *Lingnan Journal*. Later there was also Fan Cunzhong's "John Galsworthy and Chinese Culture" (1931), Fang Chong's "China and 18th Century English Literature" (1931) and Zhu Qianzhi's "The Influence of Song Rationalism on the History of European Culture" (1937) and others. However, until Chinese comparative literature surged ahead in the 1980s, research of this nature clearly remained relatively weak. I think that the reason for this is probably because to undertake this type of research you need to have very strong foreign language skills. At the time, there were still very few scholars of comparative literature whose level of competence could match that of Chen Shouyi and Fan Cunzhong and other pioneering scholars, and at the same time, comparative literature research itself was still undergoing a process of gradual deepening.

By the 1990s, and especially in the late 90s, because of the globalized economy and the exploding development of science and technology, the urgency to protect the cultural ecology and promote multiculturalism became more acute by the day. People not only considered the need to maintain, not to mention display the special characteristics of their own culture, but they also hoped, through engagement and exchange with other cultures, to fully utilize and renovate their own culture and different cultures required more space for understanding and tolerance in order to achieve the aim of multicultural survival and to put an end to cultural confrontation. Thereupon comparative literature, which sees intercultural and cross-disciplinary literary research as its responsibility, developed even more broadly and deeply. If we add to this the fact that the world has entered the post-colonial period, a number of former colonizers which had previously seen former colonial cultures as "inferior" and "uncivilized" have realized that if they are to seek world peace and promote the renovation and development of their own cultures then they must understand other cultures more and strengthen international cultural exchange and mutual study. Thus, a considerable number of new works appeared in some Western countries which analyzed the influence of China on Western culture.

The newly edited *Foreign Writers and Chinese Culture* rose to the occasion and has at least the following unique characteristics: First, it links the ancient and modern and summarizes the influence of Chinese culture on foreign literatures throughout the ages, following the historical track of foreign literary development; Second, it amalgamates literature, history and philosophy with literature, taking foreign literary development as the warp and the influence of China's literature, history and philosophy as the weft and weaves a new history of literary relations;

Third, an even greater range of sources is used and a deeper analysis of individual cases; Fourth, it adopted a development concept that incorporated a wide range of relationships. Inevitably, the reception and evaluation by foreign literature of Chinese culture comes with it its own historico-social motivations, including the genuine and the reactive, low ebbs and upsurges, and the series analyses these issues comparatively deeply. Of course, that is not to say that all volumes in the series incorporate all of the above elements, and the academic quality of the various volumes is also uneven, but its success overall is reasonable.

In a word, *Foreign Writers and Chinese Culture* is an innovative work which forms a bridge between the past and the future and has an irreplaceable realistic and historical significance. Especially in the current upsurge of developing the western regions of China, the fact that this work has been published by the Ningxia Publishing house which is situated in the multi-ethnic Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, illustrates the faith and determination of the government and people of the Ningxia Autonomous Region in their march toward the international cultural stage as well as reflecting the ardent hopes and support of the broad scholarly community toward the development of the Western regions.

Chapter 11
Renovating Methodology: The Development of Hermeneutics and Comparative Literature

11.1 Symbols and Meaning

The first question we need to discuss is how is meaning generated and how are symbols understood and interpreted? In the rules of transport, a red light means you cannot proceed, an amber light means you have to wait, and a green light means you can proceed. Under these circumstances, red, green, and amber are a type of symbol, a colored symbol, whose meaning is very clear and it holds true across most of the globe. In the science of symbols, red, green, and amber are called "signifiers" and the meaning they convey is deemed "signified." But the meaning of some symbols is not so clear. For example, if you were to say that someone had worn a green cap, Chinese people would probably understand what you meant, namely that their wife had had an extramarital affair. But if in the West you were to say to someone that you had worn a green cap, and then he would probably think it strange and ask where the green cap was? He would not understand the meaning. To convey the same meaning, a Westerner would put their two hands on their head indicating that they had grown two horn and we Chinese would not understand what they meant. So different symbols mean different things in different cultures, and symbols are attached to their meanings. With changes over time and differences between cultures, they also often experience change. In China, we often speak of "red and white happy occasions" where a red occasion refers to a wedding and a white occasion indicates a funeral. Red and white are also both colors. Red represents happy commemorations and white represents sadness. If someone in the family dies, everyone must wear white mourning garments, but the West is different. If they lose someone, they wear black and if someone marries, Chinese people wear red ceremonial robes whereas a Westerner will wear a white wedding gown. If you do not understand these conventions and wear the wrong thing, then at best, you might be scolded and at worst, you may be banished from the home. However, China is changing. If we look at a picture of a wedding dress, it will

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invariably be white and very few people wear red any more. So we can see that the meaning of symbols is constantly changing.

When we speak of interpretation or perhaps explanation, the English expression is also a single word: "interpretation," meaning to understand and to explain an incident, a sentence or a word, probing its meaning. Probing meaning is a branch of learning. In the West it is a very important branch, called Hermeneutics (in Chinese "诠释学" or "阐释学") and has its roots in the interpretation of the Bible. This is an extremely important advance in the methodology of thought and this paper is only able to introduce some of its main principles and to link it to comparative literature in order to initiate some discussion.

11.2 Interpretation and "Imaging"

In the process of man's persistent cultural development, every writer cannot but be constrained by the limitations of time and space. And interpreters are no different. Their understanding and explanation can also be constrained by limitations of time and space. With the advance of time, explanations can also continuously change and advance and they themselves constitute a very important aspect of history. *A Dream of Red Mansions* is one example. People's explanations of *A Dream of Red Mansions* vary greatly. Initially, many believed that this was a work which described the secret history of the Qing court and they searched for hidden meaning, attempting to show who Emperor Kangxi was and who his favorite concubine was. Every detail insinuated some incident at court. This method of searching for hidden meaning was used relatively early to explain *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Later, people claimed that it did not describe affairs at court at all and that it described the author of *A Dream* himself, that it was an autobiography of Cao Xueqin, how he lived in an aristocratic family and how he gradually declined until he finally fell apart. Then, there were others who said that the whole book was an explanation of the concept of emptiness, explaining a principle of Buddhism. The objects of multiple forms and colors in *A Dream of Red Mansions* are nothing but illustrations of the fact that the vicissitudes of life in the end are but emptiness. In other words, "all material pleasures are nothing but illusion." Later, Mao Zedong stated that *A Dream of Red Mansions* was a history of class struggle, formed around the class struggle between the four big aristocratic families of Jia, Wang, Shi, and Xue. Even later still there were other explanations. So it can be seen that one work or one piece can be subject to many different reading methodologies and as times and history change and the explainers vary, so to do their explanations change constantly. Some say that since the above methods of explaining *A Dream of Red Mansions* cannot all be correct, we should seek a true method of interpreting it! But what is the correct method of interpretation? From the point of view of hermeneutics, there is no absolute criterion for judging what is correct or incorrect. Because the interpreters themselves are not the same, their interpretation of a work will also differ and we cannot say that this explanation if absolutely correct and another is therefore

absolutely mistaken. It is entirely natural that as history advances there will be different understandings of a work and these differences illustrate precisely the vitality of a work. If a work were to forever only have one interpretation then nobody would ever look at it again. What then is to be gained by constantly revisiting an object? Without it, the history of literature could not progress.

To appreciate literature, the observer must firstly have a certain type of ability, namely the ability to "form images". In other words, one must have the ability to transform the words on the page via your own imagination into a "human image." A novel's sole tool of transmission is its words. All colors, scenes, and characters can only be constructed through words and our imagination. When an author writes a novel, unlike television, he cannot write everything. He will leave many blanks, and those parts that the author does not include must be supplemented by the reader's own imagination. When we read a great novel, we can usually construct an approximation of what the main characters must look like in our minds. When we read *A Dream of Red Mansions*, we can imagine what the main female character Lin Daiyu must look like. But the Lin Daiyu in different people's minds will certainly not be the same. This is determined by differences in taste, interest and living environment. Someone who prefers constraint and solitude will imagine Lin Daiyu as an adorable image while a problem-free person will not. When we read Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* it is the same. In sum, everyone will construct their own "so-and-so" in their mind's eye according to the words in the text. This is what is called the ability to "form images." Television is different. Everything on the screen has already been imagined by someone else: color, scenery, characters… It is obvious at a glance and there is no room for individual imagination. For example, the Lin Daiyu on the screen is the Lin Daiyu that has been constructed by the director and actors according to their understanding and it will no doubt differ from the Lin Daiyu that you had previously constructed from the words on the page. If you had not previously read *A Dream of Red Mansions* then you would have no choice but to accept the hand-me-down image that someone else has imagined.

The science of literary interpretation is the study of how different people from different understandings and create different images when they approach the same work. In other words, it means explaining a work via different methods. Some genres of art require this type of subjective human conceptualization. For example, ordinary people do not know anything about a score for a symphonic piece and they are not able to imagine the music. It must be performed by someone who understands music and is able to create a variety of canvases and images in his mind from the music. If the musical score is not decoded and if it is not given form and performed through this decoding, then there would be no music. The act of performing a piece through a score is to rely on this type of "ability to create an image" and "ability to interpret." Different people will interpret things in a different way, therefore, the conductor is crucial. When conducting the same piece of music with the same orchestra, different conductors will conduct at different levels and as a result the audience experience will also be different. This is because of the difference in individual subjective comprehension of the music between the different

conductors and their different capacities to create images. Our appreciation of a conductor is primarily an appreciation of his ability to interpret a work.

Different people, different agents at different junctures and in different spaces will interpret an object differently, and this type of interpretation has no defined boundaries because the spiritual world of the agent is constantly developing and changing, therefore, the interpretation of a work is also undergoing constant development and change. For example, even though none of the words in *The Analects* have changed over the centuries, nevertheless because of the change of the times and in the agent who is doing the interpreting, the interpretations of *The Analects* are also very different. People from the Spring and Autumn period understand *The Analects* differently, the Han Dynasty "confined themselves to one cannon" and only revered the Confucians. The hundred schools no longer contended and there could only be one explanation and that was that of Dong Zhongshu. It took until the Wei-Jin period, when a new ideological liberation movement took shape, for there to be a new interpretation of *The Analects*. In the Song period, Zhu Xi created a New Confucianism and renovated the interpretation of *The Analects*, and now today, we have yet another understanding of the text. So it can be seen that "image formation" and interpretation always moves with the times and is constantly changing.

11.3 Dialog and Engagement

If you want to interpret something, then you first must understand it, and without understanding, interpretation is impossible. Understanding and interpretation are both a type of dialog. An act of creation [of a piece of art or literature] is a dialog between the author and the work. It expounds the author's cognition of society and life, but a work cannot completely convey an author's meaning instantaneously. He needs to revise it repeatedly. This is a type of dialog. The act of reading is a conversation between a work and the reader. It elucidates a reader's cognition of a work, and cognition is not immediate but requires repeated musing. This is also a type of dialog. Dialog is a type of spiritual activity and is formed from the change in both subject and object. No matter whether it is an author or a reader who has undertaken this type of spiritual activity, all are changed in the process. Dialog requires a common discourse, and the discourse we are speaking of is not simply "language," but a discourse which has rules of play, and when we are holding a dialog or attempting mutual interpretation, both sides must respect these rules, otherwise there will be no engagement. For example, in a game of ball, football has the rules of football and volleyball has the rules of volleyball, and we cannot use the rules of volleyball to play football, or vice versa. If the rules are different then the game cannot be played and the dialog can only cease. An extremely "avant-garde" post-modern artist and an extremely conservative uneducated pedant could never agree (they have no way of connecting) because they do not share a common discourse.

How then is the meaning of a work constructed? When we read a work, we form a common linguistic space with the work. We can examine this process: when we read a work, we invariably do so using different methods.

The first is a traditional method, namely interpreting the work through the author's environment and his aspirations. First of all, we need to understand the author's attitude toward the piece and the social context. This is as Mencius described: "Know the individual and discuss the matter." We must know a person and discuss the events surrounding him; otherwise one is unable to know what his work means and no way of connecting with the author. There is no common discourse and so no possibility of dialog.

The second type of interpretation is through the work itself. The author is not important because he/she has already passed on. What he originally intended to write, others will never know. Even if the author is not dead, it is still difficult to completely trust his/her own explanation because it is very difficult for he himself to explain clearly his "original intent" and if he is able to state that original intent clearly, then it could be that "the theme is mobilized at the outset" or that it is an "illustrated creative work." Moreover, the creative process of a number of artists show that their original intention often undergoes significant change during the creative process and the conclusion of a storyline regularly differs from their thinking at the beginning of the process. A work of art must also be subject to the limitations of an artists' artistic skill. He may have originally planned to depict an extremely fine character, but because of the limitations of his skills, as well as his level of thinking, and moral rectitude, the image he outlines will not necessarily be as perfect as he had planned. So, does the common view of the majority of readers form the meaning of a work? Not necessarily. Because readers are people, and people are all different, their social positions differ, their interests are not the same and their temperaments are different, therefore their attitude to a given work will also differ. For this reason, the Western New Criticism School believes that the meaning of a work can only reject the agency of the author and reader and analyze the work itself. In other words, it is determined by the work's language, the texture of its rhetoric, etc. This is an advance in literary hermeneutics.

The third method is to begin with the work as a whole and its structure. The New Criticism school only talks about the work itself and separates the work from the author and reader and even society. The work becomes an isolated object. But this also has its limitations. Later, structuralist criticism emerged which places a work in the context of a number of works and seeks to derive meaning from the relationship between them. Structuralism argues that all works are created under specific common structural relationships. We in the field of comparative literature speak of thematology and believe that many themes are similar, like in Greek mythology where many heroes are unhappy with their current situation and want to leave home and seek the golden fleece or the beauty Helen [of Troy] or the "sacred cup," etc. Most of them have a mission which forces them to leave home and wander abroad, experiencing all manner of danger which matures them until they triumphantly return to their homeland. From many Western works we can deduce the following structure: leave home—endure hardship—come to a new understanding of human

life—return home. And China is similar. Sun Wukong was King of the monkeys on Huaguo Mountain. Originally, his life was quite comfortable and free. However, the more he lived this life, the more he felt the desire to break out of Huaguo Mountain and see the outside world, and just like the Greek heroes who wanted to seek out the Golden Fleece, he wanted to go beyond his birthplace. Thus, Sun Wukong journeys to Heaven and wreaks havoc there and is imprisoned in a cooking cauldron by Gold Star where he is broiled for 81 days, turning his eyes into a pair that is extraordinarily piercing, and after suffering 81 hardships he eventually achieves the status of Buddha. Jia Baoyu was originally an obstinate stone, left over from Nüwa's efforts to mend the sky with multicolored rocks. He was not willing to live forever on that desolate mountain under Qinggeng Peak, so he followed two monks to the colorful Grand View Garden and endured a set of joys and sorrows and human suffering to finally return to his original desolate mountain. From the point of view of structure, these also follow the pattern of leave home—endure hardship—come to a new understanding of human life—return home. There are still more works with a similar structure and comparative literature terms the common theme of this type of work the "enlightenment theme". If we place a work together with others that share a common structure in order to analyze and understand it, then this is the structuralist method.

From the above it can be seen that there are three different methods of understanding and interpreting a work. Naturally, there is a fourth method and that is via the reader, the reader's reflection on theory, or total reliance on the reader for his/her interpretation. Because all readers are different and societies in different epochs are not the same, therefore, the interpretations of a work will be different. In the past, we have generally got to know a work using these four methods, engaging in a dialog with the author and with the work itself and forming a common discourse. No matter what method we use to construct a dialog between the author and the reader through the work, they all constitute a process of comprehension and interpretation.

11.4 The Hermeneutic Circle and Excessive Interpretation

In the process of comprehension and interpretation, there is a problem of elliptical interpretation. When you are studying and wish to understand a sentence, you must understand it in the context of the document as a whole for it to have meaning. Understanding a sentence or a particular character or word in isolation is always inaccurate. However, if you wish to understand the whole document, you need in turn to first understand the meaning of each sentence and word or character. This is a paradox: if you want to understand every word, you must first understand its linguistic context, or in other words, the meaning of the document as a whole, and if you wish to understand the meaning of the document as a whole, you must first of all understand the meaning of each word and sentence. To put it another way: to understand the part, you must understand the whole, and to understand the whole, you must understand the part. This type of interpretive contradiction in theory is

called a Hermeneutic Circle. This is also what China's textual criticism and classical commentary refers to as "tracing back from the end to the root and probing the root to discover the end." "Tracing back from the end to the root" means that when we are getting to know an object we should begin with its furthermost extremities, its outermost appearance, its most minute detail, get to the bottom of it and be exhaustive, seeking the most basic of elements. And these extremities, these appearances, these minutiae must be placed in a holistic linguistic environment and drilled to the core, and only then will you be able to grasp its meaning definitively. This is what is meant by "probe the root to discover the end," so this is a difficult paradox. We can only say: on the one hand, gain a partial understanding while on the other hand probe the whole, then with one's understanding of the whole, look back again at the part and see whether that accords with our original understanding. This type of circular to-ing and fro-ing will enable us to truly understand and interpret an object. With this circular interpretation we can see that the process of understanding an object's meaning is a continually progressing and developing spiral.

So is this interpretive circle never ending? Time is constantly changing, so is it possible to have an infinite number of different interpretations of an event or a work of literature? For example, we might say that *A Dream of Red Mansions* is an autobiographical novel, or is a novel which disseminates Buddhist ideology, or is a novel which tells the secret history of the court, or is a novel which describes class struggle… it should be said that this is a free and never-ending process, but does it have any limits? Is interpretation infinite? In 1999, a debate raged amongst Western interpretation circles over whether or not there was a final limit to interpretation and whether or not "excessive interpretation" was possible. At the end of the discussion, everyone agreed on one point: when one interprets a work of literature or art, or there is a question of "excessive interpretation", then there will be a commonly acknowledged "limit (beyond which it is deemed excessive)." This "limit" does not reside in the intent of the author, nor does it reside in a reader's inclination to decide what kind of work it is. This "limit" ought to reside in the work itself. It is a limit that the language of the work itself is able to accept. All works of the literature are composed of language and this language is recognized by all. For example, the sentence "I have eaten" cannot be interpreted as "I have not eaten." Therefore, there is a certain limit to language itself. And the final limitation is the scope of what the language and words or characters in the works themselves are able to permit. However, the inherent meaning of language is itself subject to constant change. For example, the original meaning of "*biaoshu*" was the "father's younger male cousin via the female line," but in the model revolutionary Peking opera *The Legend of the Red Lantern*, *biaoshu* refers to a revolutionary comrade. Even later, when mainland people started to travel to Hong Kong, some of those who had no vision and insisted on "demanding cash" were termed "*biaoshu*" (because the secret signal for underground members of the Communist Party in *The Legend of the Red Lantern* was "the broom seller wants cash"). So it can be seen that the meaning of the expression *biaoshu* is also constantly undergoing change. As language and words change, the scope for interpretation also changes, and it is a change that has no limits. Therefore, interpretation can be without "limit". Naturally, this also makes a

kind of sense, but if we are speaking about a book, I am afraid that the change in the application of the language as a whole will not change drastically. Take *A Dream of Red Mansions* for example. We can say that it is a history of class struggle or the history of such-and-such. Both of these are possible. But if we insist that it is a detective novel, I am afraid that most people would not accept it. This is the "limit" to the interpretation, and if you go beyond this "limit", then this is "excessive or intemperate interpretation."

11.5 Interactive Cognition and Bidirectional Interpretation

The four methods for understanding and interpreting a piece of literature that we spoke of above all belong to logic's cognitive styles or methods. Logic's cognitive style, acknowledging the separation between the subjective and objective worlds, generally speaking is a type of content analysis whereby the concrete contents of an objective object is removed through "reduction or concentration," or induction, and then generalized to the most concise common form, and finally summed up as a metaphysical logos or Hegelian absolute spirit, then extrapolated by means of "deduction" into a different concrete form. Using this method, all concepts can be generalized into a pure ideal form that is non-corporeal, lacks substance, and is timeless. All narratives can be simplified into a closed space and in this defined space all processes will embody a type of fundamental architectural form and all content can finally be generalized into that form. As we have outlined above, the narrative of quite a number of works of literature can be induced or summarized into the following structure: a preexisting "deficiency or shortcoming" becomes "a shortcoming that is remedied" or "a deficiency that has been determined to be un-salvageable," and finally there is success or defeat. A number of these types of narrative structures can be combined to form a "meta-narrative" or "meta-text" of similar structures, embodying a specific set of rules, essences and inevitabilities.

Interactive cognition is different to this. It holds that the subjective and objective are not necessarily two clear-cut halves and that the object does not necessarily bear no relationship with the subject's cognition or its own objective determinacy. The subject and object are both in a state of mutual cognition and experience change and reconstruction of themselves and together enter a new period of cognizance. As Su Shi's "Inscribed on the Wall of West Forest Monastery" puts it: "From the side it's a mountain wall, from the end a single peak. Near, far, high, low—each view is different. I do not know Lu Mountain's true face, because I find myself in the mountain's midst."[1] When understanding and interpreting an object, we should observe the position of the subject, its movement and frame of mind, all of which will have an influence in its interpretation of the object. So, when we discuss the

[1]Translation taken from Ron Egan, *Word Image and Deed in the Life of Su Shi.*

discourse and methodology to be used in dialog, we need to observe the difference in the objective object which has been induced by the changes in the subject, and at the same time, observe the differences in subjective cognition induced by the changes in the objective object.

So, interactive cognition is different from logical cognition. What it studies is not form, nor is it deduced or inferred from a reified actual object. Rather, it is first and foremost an actual object, a real, live, moving body that feels pain and joy. Nothing around it is fixed, but rather changes with the changes in the body's mood and perspective. Therefore, the space that this cognitive method analyzes is a changing, unrestrained, dynamic space that changes with the passion, desire and will of the subject. When we begin with this type of cognitive method, the profound patterns that people are accustomed to are deconstructed: the center is no longer called the center and any real object has the potentiality of becoming the center; that which was originally situated on the periphery, the odds and ends, and the obscured, and everything that had been covered by the center, realizes new capabilities; phenomena do not necessarily possess a fixed nature; serendipity is not necessarily always predicated on an inevitability, and a "signifier" is not always backed by a fixed "signified" (or a so-called "referent"). For example, in the past we believed that historical determinacy should be beyond question. However, from the point of view of the bidirectional interpretive cognitive method, history can be deconstructed into the two levels "history of events" and "narrative history," the former referring to real events that have occurred such as this event occurred in this year and this month. This cannot be changed. But the scope for "witnessing" a real event is of necessity very narrow and we can mostly only rely on "narrative" in order to understand history, and narrative choice, conciseness, angle, and perspective cannot avoid subjective constraints. Therefore, if we say that all history is contemporary history, we mean that it is history narrated and interpreted by contemporaries (including "contemporaries" of a given time in the past).

After the originally relatively fixed "meta-narrative" framework was dismantled, every individual strove to display their individual traits and creativity, whereupon the need to stress difference far outstripped any interest in seeking the common. The renowned Italian thinker and author Umberto Eco, delivering the keynote lecture at a meeting commemorating the 900th anniversary of the founding of Università di Bologna in 1999, suggested that the aim of continental Europe in its third millennium was "coexistence in diversity and mutual respect." He believed that the more diversity people discovered and the more they are able to accept and respect that diversity, the better they will be able to assemble in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

There are many different complex channels for seeking development amidst the interplay of difference, one especially important one being "the principle of the other" and "the principle of interaction" which in a word stresses the fact that for a deep knowledge of the subject and object we must rely on observation and reflection from the perspective of the "other." In other words, because the status and standpoint of the observer is different, his subjective world and the objective world that he recognizes changes. For this reason, if you wish to genuinely know the

world (including knowing the subject), then you must adopt a kind of "external view point" of the other and you must consider others and alien cultures with an attitude of looking at objects from a different angle. At times, things that one has not been aware of for a long time, invariably, through the prompting of the "other," will achieve a previously unimagined understanding. This type of "distant contemplative space" which is configured from an external viewpoint offers broad possibilities for the development of cognition. If we interpret the other from the point of view of the self and also interpret the self from the point of view of the other, then this is "bidirectional interpretation."

Since everything differs according to changes in space, time, status, and viewpoint, therefore, the meaning of every object is never immutable. In fact, everything in the world exists in a web of ever-changing interactive relationships, in an undefined state of limitless possibilities which, thanks to a multitude of opportunities, have coalesced to form a type of reality. The Lao–Zhuang philosophy termed this continually changing primal state of multiple possibilities the "Way" or "*Dao*." Chap. 21 of the *Dao De Jing* states: "The Way is something impalpable, incommensurable. /Incommensurable, impalpable. /Yet latent in it are forms [thought-images, ideas], /Impalpable, incommensurable,/Yet within it are entities."[2]The "forms/thought-images/ideas" and "entities" which are discussed here are a certain type of possibility that is yet to exist and yet is already in existence. This type of possibility takes the interaction that accompanies every element and dynamic evolution in both subjective and objective motion to form a type of reality. This is what Laozi termed "Something formless yet complete."[3] Chinese philosophy and Chinese modes of thought on the whole are meticulous about capacity, relationships, and opportunity. Offered different opportunities, many objects will coalesce and many possibilities will become a kind of reality. There are many, many possibilities, but only one type will become a reality. Knowledge of an object cannot be immutable. It must of necessity depend on the different evolutionary paths of the subject and the object and present different manifestations. Therefore, the process of understanding is also a process of interactive, bidirectional reconstruction.

11.6 Bidirectional Interpretation and Literary Research

As we have discussed above, bidirectional interpretation means first of all to understand the other side and then from the angle and viewpoint of that other side, to observe and progressively understand the self, leading both sides to know anew both themselves and the other. Ever since the era of economic, scientifi,c and

[2]Arthur Waley (trans.) *Lao Tzu*: *Tao Te Ching* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), Chapter 21, p. 45.

[3]Translation from ibid., p. 53.

technological globalization raised the question of multiculturalism, the question of how to advance tolerance and understanding between different cultures has become an extremely important and popular subject amongst the scholarly community. The emphasis on self-reflection from the standpoint of the "other" which has "mutual subjectivity," "mutual contextualization," "mutual referencing" and "mutual illumination" at its core has gradually been accepted by the broad masses of theoreticians and has also developed and established an important foundation for multiculturalism.

In these circumstances, China, as one of the most suitable "others," has increasingly caught the attention of the broad masses of theoreticians. As the French sinologist François Jullien notes: "The Chinese language lies outside the huge Indo-European language system and what this type of language opens up is a different type of written possibility; the Chinese civilization has developed independently of any practical borrowing or relationship influences with Europe and is the culture with the longest history… China faces our ideology squarely from the outside —and therefore is unaffected by traditional preconceptions—an ideal situation." In America, the famous Sinologist Roger Ames and the equally famous philosopher David Hall coedited three volumes that were published sequentially and caused a considerable sensation. The first volume, *Thinking Through Confucius*, reexamines Confucius' ideology using the new concepts of contemporary philosophy; the second volume, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the narratives of Chinese and Western Culture*, emphasizes the fact that the West's mode of thinking, in comparison to that of China, stresses transcendence, order, and permanence; the third work, *Thinking from the Han*: *Self*, *Truth and Transcendence*, focuses on questions of the self, truth and transcendence. Stephen Shankman's year 2000 publication, *The Siren and the Sage*: *Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, attempts a mutually responsive bidirectional interpretation of the Greek and Chinese cognitive methods. What is important is that these works on the whole no longer use the subject-object dichotomous method which analyzes China and the West as two immutable and independent actors. Rather, as Francois Jullien notes: "I do not believe that it is possible to divide a page into two with one side being China and the other Greece … Since the gist of the meaning can only be understood from within, in a process of integration with individual logic." In other words, neither Chinese now Western culture is immutable. They must display different manifestations according to their different "individual" (subjective) comprehensions. Hence, the comprehension process is a process of reconstruction.

The necessity for multicultural development has not only brought with it prominent changes in Western sinology, but at the same time it has brought a new atmosphere to non-sinological theoretical circles. While in the past, the representatives of mainstream culture such as Hegel, Marx, Weber and others did mention non-Western cultures, however, in their theoretical systems, non-Western cultures only served as a backdrop and invariably occupied a "non-mainstream" position. But today the situation is different. Some non-Sinological theoreticians have begun to use the above-mentioned "mutual context" methodology and have adopted a "non-centrist" attitude to probe Western and non-Western culture as well as

constructing new theories on this basis. The influential American theoretician, Fredric Jameson has visited China on many occasions and established a "Post-Modernism and Cultural Theory" course at Peking University. While he does not understand Chinese, he has read a lot of Lu Xun, Lao She and others' works in translation and viewed a huge number of Chinese movies and has applied what he has learned to his theories. His 1990s work *The Geopolitical Aesthetic* approaches the topic from a supra-cultural and multidisciplinary angle and uses a bidirectional interpretive methodology to discuss the clash between the function and meaning of the motion picture narrative of the Western world and that of the Third World. The renowned European theoretician, Umberto Eco, visited China in 1995 and in a lecture at Peking University noted: "To understand others does not necessarily mean to demonstrate the similarities between them and us, but rather, to understand and respect the differences between us and them." He stressed that his trip to Beijing, unlike Marco Polo and his search for the Western "Unicorn," was to understand China's dragon. He stressed: "The more differences people discover, the more differences there are that they can acknowledge, the better they are able to live and the better they are able to assemble in an area of mutual understanding." This fundamentally shook the foundation stone of West centrism.

At the same time as these theories were expanding anew, they were fundamentally changing the direction of Western comparative literature research. The discipline of comparative literature, whilst already boasting almost a century of history, was, nevertheless, largely confined to a Western cultural narrative which was based on Greek and Hebrew culture, and which adopted a consistent attitude of dominance or contempt toward non-Western cultures. Ever since the age of globalization raised the question of multiculturalism, this situation witnessed great changes and comparative literature and culture research quickly broke through the closed Western cultural edifice and entered a domain of mutual consultation between Western and non-Western cultures. This type of sudden change could not but concern some Western scholars who had not paid attention to and who did not understand non-Western cultures and were not prepared, to the extent that some teaching and research institutions that specialized in comparative literature and which confined themselves to the Western cultural narrative, suspended their operations, leading to cries of a crisis in comparative literature. Actually, we are speaking here only of that old-style comparative literature which was closed and Euro-centric, but if we take supra-cultural literary research as the definition of the newly arisen comparative literature, then this type of comparative literature is obviously flourishing across the whole world. Some of the more perceptive scholars of comparative literature long ago saw this coming and moreover adjusted their research focus toward research on heterogeneous culture and literature. For example the latest work by the noted American scholar Earl Miner who served as president of the international comparative literature association for two consecutive terms, *Comparative Poetics*: *An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature*,[4] focuses on mutual contextual

[4]Princeton University Press, 1990.

research into East-West poetics; or the nine volume *A History of World Comparative Literature*, edited by the international comparative literature association, which originally only included Euro-American culture and termed this "the world" has now not only included a volume on *The History of Comparative Literature in East Asia*, but the modern and post-modern volume has added modern and contemporary literature content from China and other non-Western regions as well.

If we say that in the past China's comparative literature consistently emphasized the use of Western theoretical methodologies to unidirectionally research Chinese literary phenomena, then despite its many flaws, nevertheless it achieved great success. Therefore, today, when interactive cognition and bidirectional interpretation has achieved such broad acceptance, the comparative literature discipline which takes research into multicultural and multidisciplinary literary research as its responsibility must surely soon achieve unprecedented development. The three previously unrelated Western scholarly circles of Sinology, theoretical research and comparative literature research are rapidly converging and achieving complementarity, mutual recognition, and mutual affirmation. In this fortunate environment, if China and the rest of the world join forces then the newly emerging comparative literature research will certainly make an important contribution to the reconstruction of twenty-first century culture.

Chapter 12
Linking Up with the Perspicacity of Foreign Climes: André Gide and His Chinese Doctoral Student, Zhang Ruoming

On the January 12, 1931, the Nobel laureate in Literature, André Gide (1869–1951) along with Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Thomas Mann and other renowned French authors, wrote a letter full of warmth and enthusiasm to an ordinary Chinese foreign student, Zhang Ruoming. He wrote: "You cannot imagine what encouragement and comfort your work (referring to her research on Gide) has brought me… Through your work it is as if I have been given a new life. Thanks to you, I have been reminded of my existence… You have given my unworthy manuscript luster and I am deeply touched! Writing to you is like writing to a close friend. I must say a big 'thank you' to you, and it is truly heartfelt."[1] Prior to this, Gide and Zhang Ruoming had been separated by seas and oceans, their stations were as different as heaven and earth. How could he, a complete stranger, take a 20 something Zhang Ruoming as an intimate friend and offer such a sincere and sublime appraisal of her doctoral dissertation *Gide's Attitude*? What kind of a person was Zhang Ruoming?

Zhang Ruoming (1902–1958) was a leader in the May Fourth Tianjin student movement and women's liberation movement. In November 1920, she took the same boat as Zhou Enlai and traveled to France to study and work part time. On January 21, 1924 she represented the Communist Party of China and took part in the grand memorial service held by the Lyon Branch of the Communist Party of France to commemorate Lenin. and was monitored by the French secret police. That same year, Zhou Enlai was summoned back to China, her good friend Guo Longzhen went to the Soviet Union to study, and all of the revolutionary work around Zhang Ruoming "was scattered and disorganized." Added to this, her immediate superior at the time, Ren Zhuoxuan (Ye Qing), was subjective and arbitrary and had a cruel working style. Zhang Ruoming had always cherished freedom and felt it difficult to work under his leadership, so she decided to dedicate herself to her academic work and in 1924 she entered Lyon University to study

[1]For Gide's original letter and a translation, see *Zhong Fa daxue yuekan*, 1931, Vol. 1, Issue 1; for the original letter also see *Beijing zhengwenbao* (La Politique de Pekin), Issue 45, 7th November, 1931.

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psychology. In February 1928 Zhang Ruoming was awarded a Master's degree in the humanities from Lyon University and proceeded on to do a doctorate in French literature, focusing on "French literary history and literary theory from a psychological perspective." Her supervisor J. Segond. had an extremely high opinion of her and said: "Not only have I discovered that she is a very conscientious student, but she is also an agile thinker and her command of the French language is such that she is able to discern even the slightest of differences." He went on to say: "Zhang Ruoming's achievements are an honor to our school."[2] On December 15, 1930, Zhang Ruoming easily defended her doctoral dissertation and her dissertation was not only assessed as a most outstanding achievement, but she also won a scholarship of 500 French francs. This doctoral thesis is precisely the famous *Gide's Attitude*.

Gide's Attitude is divided into 8 chapters: (1) "The transformation of Gide's personality," (2) "Gide's religious beliefs," (3) "Gide and morality," (4) "Gide's attitude towards sensory objects," (5) "Gide's Narcissism"," (6) "The formation of Gide's symbolist aesthetic view," (7) "Gide's Classicism," and (8) "Gide in the eyes of his contemporaries."

What most elicited Gide's praise were the following points: first and foremost was "Gide's Narcissism". Gide commented: "Chapter 5 of [your] great work pleased me especially. I truly believe that I have never been so incisively understood by anybody." What Zhang Ruoming stressed in this chapter was how the author was able to know himself. She states: "Artists yearn to understand themselves and this compels them to interrogate this clear stream which symbolizes their pristine life in an attempt to know whether or not their beauty is able to last a little longer;" however, the surging waves force them to go their separate ways, and especially "From the point of view of the dim distant future, some objects remain latent and only later do they appear to finally become the past." Thus, it is not sufficient to rely on an analysis of external objects in order to understand an object and oneself because "we, as the subjects of cognition, and objects, as the object of cognition, are diametrically opposite." Zhang Ruoming argued that Gide transcended this dichotomy: "Through introspection, Gide discovered the mutual interaction of the universe. He does not use his sensory organs to examine the external world, but rather turns his gaze towards the depth of his own innermost being, and there he is able to gain an impression of the world." In the final analysis, it is "through introspection [that] Gide is able to discover the mutual interaction of the universe" and at the same time, "through introspection, Gide finds the subject matter for his work." In his letter to Zhang Ruoming, Gide indicates that the sentence that he appreciates most is: "Every time he creates a character, he always invests the character with his own life." Zhang Ruoming argues that Gide constantly creates all types of characters "under the influence of a type of incredible sympathy, fusing with the thought and emotions of the character that he is

[2]"Saigong tuijianxin". 2nd September, 1927. Now held in the archives of the Lyon Sino–French University Association.

researching and in his innermost being, recreating him." "Gide is able to put aside his own will and stand aside for the character, then stand in his corner and live." However, he at times may also extricate himself from the character and "free himself." In sum, everything is accomplished through introspection within one's innermost being.

Gide also went on to say: "In the next chapter when she speaks of classicism and romanticism, this incisive argument is further developed: '… the characters in the work are never satisfied with what has been achieved.' And she also quotes from Flaubert's works in those comments regarding style—brilliant!" In this chapter, Zhang Ruoming mainly discusses the style of Gide's works. She believes that the romantics had expressed a type of natural and living emotion and exaggerated them while the classicists prefer forms of beauty; their language is refined and clear and employs intense emotion to maintain a lofty equanimity. She argued that Flaubert sought to create a style which used a fixed form to express a liberated content, allowing the ideals of the classicists and the romantics to harmonize. However, his overemphasis on form strangled the emotional spontaneity. "Only Gide's style offers a meticulously crafted form with a liberated content. Rich emotion saturates the words and sentences, and a precise and elegant pen adds an emotional and measured pace. In sum, as a classicist, his sentences conform to the requirements of idealism and refinement, but he also transcends the classicists and frees his own emotions. His style changes with the emotional development and its syntax and architecture changes along with it."

Of the last section of this letter Gide notes: "There remain many points in your research that deserve praise! How I love the last section of your last chapter, such a succinct conclusion: 'The opposition of two points of view does not signify an interruption to thought. And I also really love the initial sentence in the next section… The conclusion that you so naturally draw is, I believe, exceptionally true." Looking at Zhang Ruoming's original text, the conclusion that Gide appreciated so much stems from the multifaceted defense that Zhang Ruoming mounted for him. She acknowledges that "Gide's logic is permeated with contradictions. He regularly changes his point of view and constantly adjusts his thinking to accord with all types of viewpoints." She adds: "Let us assume that Gide allows his intellect to leap from one point of view to another, causing his own thinking to accord with several (and not just a single) criteria that should be complied with. What would be so extraordinary about that? The opposition of two points of view does not signify an interruption to thought!" In other words, different ideological viewpoints can get along without being homogenized and coexist. The "extremely realistic conclusion" that Zhang Ruoming "so naturally drew" and which Gide "loved so much" was her final sentence: "Dominating and also forming his main virtue is his sacrifice of the self." Zhang Ruoming quotes Gide himself to illustrate this point. In the work *Dostoevsky*, Gide states: "Sacrificing the self-causes those contending emotions to coexist in Dostoyevsky's soul. Sacrificing the self also protects and rescues the riches that are formed from objects in conflict." Zhang Ruoming explains how when Gide's "contradictory tendencies mutually collided to create a type of disharmony. Only one virtue was able to draw this disharmony

towards order and that was the sacrifice of self." Gide always "firmly believed that [his] own power resided in self-sacrifice, hence I strongly advocate the abandonment of self." This formed Gide's character and the crux of his work.

I often ask myself, why, out of the host of stars of French literature did Zhang Ruoming choose only André Gide, and why was she so attached to him, saw him as so important and understood him so deeply?

In 1931, the day after Zhang Ruoming successfully defended her doctoral thesis; she left Lyon and returned home. Some 15 years later, she wrote another relatively lengthy piece entitled "In Memory of André Gide" which was published in Beiping's *New Currents* monthly in Issue 4, Volume 1, 1946. In this essay, Zhang Ruoming recalls: "When I was young and ignorant, I used to love reading Gide. I loved his boundless loneliness, I loved his pure passion, I loved the sorrow that was hidden deep within his soul, and I especially liked the bitter romance that he savored." When was this period when she was "young and ignorant"? Zhang Ruoming entered Tianjin No. 1 Girls' Teaching Academy and in 1919 was drawn into the vigorous revolutionary struggle, traveling to France in 1920 to work and study. So, this period when she "loved to read Gide" could only have been when she was 15 or 16, a period when she was most impressionable, in her early youth when her vitality was bursting out. Zhang Ruoming not only analyzed Gide's ideology and reasoning, but she also poured her whole life and emotions into it and so she was able to observe those hidden places that many others had failed to discover.

On the other hand, Zhang Ruoming's association with Gide was an exchange between two extremely distant cultures. The reason why Gide found Zhang Ruoming's assessment of him so novel and refreshing, to the extent that he "truly believe[d] that [he had] never been so incisively understood by anybody" undoubtedly has something to do with the association of the two different cultures. We indeed have no data to prove just how many ancient Chinese books Zhang Ruoming had read, and she never quotes from the classics, but the spirit of Chinese culture had undoubtedly taken root in her veins, just as it has taken root in the veins of untold numbers of ordinary citizens. The three points mentioned above that Gide was most pleased about Zhang Ruoming were: that he stressed introspection, believing that "everything is accomplished through introspection within one's innermost being;" stressing beauty in terms of form, enabling intense emotion to maintain a lofty equanimity; and stressing the coexistence of opposing elements and firmly believing that "conquering self" can promote new development. Obviously, all of these are intimately related to the Chinese cultural line of thinking and not completely congruent with the reality of French culture.

There is a genuine mutual admiration between Zhang Ruoming and Gide, an intimate exchange of emotion and a deep mutual understanding, exhaustingly similar lines of thinking, and a frank mode of expression. While they never met, nevertheless they constituted an outstanding model of international spiritual connectivity which richly deserves our further investigation and exploitation.

Chapter 13
The Last Decadent in China: Shanghai's Shao Xunmei

The original Latin meaning of decadence was to "fall away," or to decay in value, or decline in literary excellence after a period of major accomplishment. Decadent in Chinese translation equates to the two characters "*tuifei*" 颓废 which carries negative connotations which are not present in the original. The Chinese "颓" has connotations of collapse and decay, while "废" has connotations of abandonment and worthlessness. The two characters "颓废" appeared as a compound in the *Book of Later Han: Biography of Di Pu* meaning collapsed and lying waste, which carries a more derogatory or negative connotation than the word "decadence". Thus "颓废" in contemporary China refers more to a depressed will or a downcast state while some of the meanings that the original "decadence" in the West includes such as dissatisfaction with the current reality, abandonment of established rules of morality, the pursuit of aestheticist art, sensory stimulation, etc., have to a certain extent been played down. Add to this the fact that Shanghainese scholars have transliterated "decadence" from the French pronunciation into Shanghainese which has turned it into *tuijiadang*, which has meant that decadence became even less palatable to people. However, from the close of the twentieth century to the beginning of the 1930s, the original meaning of decadence did enjoy a brief period of popularity in Chinese literary history. The overpowering calls to save the nation and the people in Chinese society at the time drowned out such peripheral matters, making it appear as if there was no response at all in China to the international "end of the century aestheticism and decadence" tide of thought, but the reality was quite different.

As early as 1909, the *Collection of Foreign Fiction* translated by Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren included works by the aestheticist writer, Oscar Wilde. In 1915, his *An Ideal Husband* and *The Tragedy of Florence* were serialized in Volume 1 Issue 2 of *Youth Magazine*; in 1920, *Salome* was carried in the supplement to *Republican Daily*; in 1921, his comedic masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest* was published by Taidong Publishing Co.; in May, 1921, *Fiction Monthly* began to serialize his *A Woman of No Importance*; the inaugural edition of *Creation Quarterly* in 1922 carried Yu Dafu's introduction to his *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, followed by a review of it in *Fiction Monthly*. It was in that year that Wilde's prose poetry, essays; treatises on literature along with précis of himself were

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splashed across all manner of newspapers and magazines. Finally, in December 1922, Commercial Press published his collection of essays, *De Profundis*. All of this built into a high tide of introducing aestheticism—decadence as well as Wilde himself. In 1923, *Lady Windermere's Fan* (first translated in 1920 as *Fan* and carried in the magazine *People's Bell*[1]) was adapted by Hong Shen and after being carried in *The Eastern Miscellany*, it won rave reviews after it was performed under the title *The Young Lady's Fan*. Zhu Guangqian even felt that it was more successful than the performance of the original work in England.[2]

Apart from Wilde, the works of many other aestheticist and decadent writers were introduced into China at this time, and especially in Shanghai. In September 1923, *Creation Weekly* serialized Yu Dafu's major essay "The Yellow Book and other matters" in which he introduced the core journal of the aestheticists and decadents, *The Yellow Book*, and a group of spirited individuals, including Aubrey Beardsley, Ernest Dowson, John Davidson and others. It was precisely at this time that other aestheticist-decadent writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Symons, D'Annunzio and the Japanese decadent writers Kafū Nagai and Jun'ichirō Tanizaki were introduced into China and gained a degree of influence.

However, between 1917 and 1924, idealist and romanticist passions gained the upper hand amongst the Chinese intelligentsia, even though the aestheticist-decadent school's highly capable Creation Society, raising high the grand standard of "Art for Art's Sake", introduced the aestheticist-decadent school and idealized it. As Zhu Ziqing noted, their concentration on "the conflict between the spirit and the flesh" and "the demand for personal liberation" were all "still solemnly looking life squarely in the eye" and "simultaneously serving the cause of anti-feudalism."[3] Even as the most decadent of writers, Yu Dafu, was labeled "decadent" by some, including Mao Dun, his fellow travelers from the Creation Society leapt to his defense. Guo Moruo, for example, quoted Li Chuli saying "Dafu is an imitation depressive",[4] and Zheng Boqi stated "Dafu is a false decadent" and more. So we can see that society and the intelligentsia of the time saw the decadent school in a negative light.

It was not until 1927, when the glorious revolution was defeated, that there was any fundamental change to this situation. At the time, as carnage spread across the country, the one-time birthplace of the revolution and the witness to the rise of many a revolutionary high tide, the great cosmopolitan city of Shanghai was thrown immediately into chaos. Pessimism and despair, desperation, vacillation and vacuous decadence engulfed the entire Shanghai intelligentsia. In these circumstances, such magazines as *Green Society*, *Fantasy Society*, *Sphinx*, and *Sound and Color*, corresponding to small literary groups that embraced aestheticism, expressionism and decadence, appeared sequentially. However their influence remained minimal until Shao Xunmei

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[1] *Minduo*, Vol. 1, No. 4.

[2] Meng Shi, "Lǚ Ying zatan," *Yiban* magazine, Vol. 1, No. 2.

[3] Zhu Ziqing, "Lun yansu", *Zhu Ziqing quanji*, Vol. 3, p. 140.

[4] Guo Moruo, "Lun Yu Dafu"—see Rao Hongjing et al. (eds), *Chuangzao she ziliao* (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1985), p. 803.

established the Golden Studio Bookshop, and after he set up the *Golden Studio Monthly* (and publishing house) in 1929, when the situation changed dramatically. Before 1927 there were only six or seven volumes of aestheticist-decadent works published, but between 1928 and 1930, the Golden Studio Bookshop, centered on the *Golden Studio Monthly* with its bold stance, quickly assembled China's first group of aestheticist-decadent devotees and in the short space of two years more than 34 different original works and translations were produced.

Shao Xunmei (1898–1973) wrote under the noms de plume Shao Haowen, Shao Haoping, Shao Wen and Guo Ming. His grandfather was the Qing diplomat Shao Youlian and his mother was the daughter of the grand official and trader Sheng Xuanhuai. He himself married Sheng Xuanhuai's granddaughter and inherited the extremely prodigious wealth of the two families. In 1924 Shao Xunmei studied art at Oxford, after which he pursued further studies in France in 1925. That same year, he, along with such individuals as Xu Beihong, Zhang Daofan and Jiang Biwei, organized the "Heavenly Dog Society" (adapting the meaning of lunar eclipse or the Heavenly Dog Devouring the Moon) in Paris. In 1926 he returned to Shanghai and in 1927 he published his first collection of poetry, *Paradise and May*[5] (Guanghua Publishing Co.) and in May of that same year went on to inaugurate the monthly magazine *Sphinx*. In 1928 Shao Xunmei established the Golden Studio Bookshop, coinciding with the publication of his signature poetry collection *Flower-like Evil* along with the volume of literary criticism entitled *Fire and Flesh* and a collection of poetry in translation, *Multiple Bunches of Roses*, by the Bookshop. In January of 1929 he established the *Golden Studio Monthly*, only to cease publication in September 1930. In 1930 he established the Era Book Co. and in 1932, the semi-monthly magazine *Analects*, edited by Lin Yutang, a position which Shao Xunmei and Yu Dafu also held, up to its closure in 1949. Shao Xunmei also edited and translated *The Collected Poetry and Art of Aubrey Beardsley* (1929), and translated George Moore's *Memoirs of My Dead Life* (1929). He later also published *Twenty-Five Poems* (Era Book Co., 1936).

Shao Xunmei was heavily influenced by the British and French symbolist and aestheticist-decadent schools of the end of the nineteenth century. He relates how he discovered his revered Swinburne from the Greek Sapho, "From Swinburne I discovered the Pre-Raphaelite group and then from them, accessed Baudelaire and Paul Verlain."[6] Whilst in England, Shao Xunmei had a significant amount of contact with the contributors to the English magazine *The Yellow Book* which advocated aestheticism and "pure poetry" and with George Moore in particular. He published ten "Unadulterated poems"[7] in his magazine *Sphinx*, differentiating Moore's pure poetry from the French symbolist pure poetry. In his *Twenty-Five Poems: A Preface*, he outlined his own view of poetry and attempted to, from a

[5]"Tiantang yu wuyue". Rendition according to Jonathan Hutt, "Monstre Sacré::The Decadent World of Sinmay Zau", *China Heritage Quarterly*, No. 22, June 2010.

[6]"Shi ershiwushou—zixu," in *Shi ershiwushou* (Shanghai: Shidai tushugongsi, 1936), p. 6.

[7]"Chuncui de shi".

Chinese perspective and focusing on "the perfection of form", integrate the different Western aestheticist and decadent tides of thought. This is a unifying theme throughout Shao Xunmei's literary career. The second issue of *Sphinx* was named "The D.G. Rossetti Issue" and introduced the major Pre-Raphaelite figure of Rossetti. Shao Xunmei wrote the essay "Rossetti and *The Germ*" (*The Germ*[8] was the Pre-Raphaelites' organ) especially for this Issue. He also translated Dante Gabriel Rossetti's novel *Hand and Soul*. In *Sphinx* Shao Xunmei wrote many articles discussing Swinburne's work, and in the letters column of *Golden Studio Monthly* he repeatedly introduced the Parnassians, and wrote the article *The Poetry and Criticism of the Parnassians* for the inaugural issue of *Today*, introducing their viewpoint in detail.

The main philosophy of the Decadent group as represented by Shao Xunmei was the need to escape the dark and false society, and during this fleeting mortal life, seek or create for oneself a type of world that is full of enchantment and stimulation, a world that takes physical pleasure and "unrestrained nature" as its object and hence the necessity to first "rescue and liberate" people from the old morality that binds people and become a person of "unbending will and uncompromising rebelliousness", thus enabling one to enjoy this brief life amidst love and beauty. His most famous poem, "Love of Decadence", can perhaps best illustrate his philosophy. He writes:

The clouds lie on heaven's bed,
Not accompanied by his lover,
Perhaps it is an incitement to joy.
They actually embrace in a passionate kiss.
Ah, having copulated with this one,
He moves on to dally with another;
Amidst this music and color,
His soul is thus obliterated.

He observes everything in the world through lustful eyes, as Anatole France puts it: "All objects display the form of love. The myriad objects of nature, from the beasts to the grasses, all represent to me the embrace of the flesh …" In addition, most poets of the aestheticist group or those who suffer from the century end malady, eulogize "death", but Shao Xunmei specifically stresses "an attachment to life" and "the joy of living." This joy mainly refers to a joy of the "body" or the "flesh". Apart from taking on the Western notions of the aestheticist—decadent pursuit of sensory pleasure and his works exuding the influence of century-end human depression, they clearly reveal the color of China's long tradition of erotic poetry and *Jin Ping Mei*.

Shao Xunmei feverishly sought beauty in form. In his *Pure Poetry*[9] he discusses George Moore's pure poetics and the poetry of such people as the French symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé and others. He argues: "Only a form that is able to

[8]Translated into Chinese as "Peitai" or "Mengya".

[9]"Chuncui de shi", *Shihou* semi–monthly magazine's relaunched edition, Issue 4.

harmonize with the 'individual character' of the poem itself can be said to be the perfect form." Thus he believes that to first liberate ourselves from a Hu Shih-style "sole focus on form," we must not only tastefully choose between the classical language and the vernacular, but we must also seek a type of inner "carnal" beauty that cannot be divorced from content. He further stressed that poetry cannot be understood like language. He notes: "When a poem is truly transparent, it has entered the realm of prose."[10] All great poetry contains a type of grand symbolism and is packed full of all types of hints and metaphors, so it is invariably complex and nebulous.

Shao Xunmei's creations are comprehensively steeped with his literary propositions. In his essay "A Believer Caught between the Thieves' Den and the Temple" , through his praise of the French purist poet Paul Verlaine, he further systematically expounds his literary stance, and, practicing what he preaches, goes on to implement them to the extent that Xu Zhimo at one stage dubbed him "The authentic Verlaine." His famous collection of poetry, *Flower-like Evil* also distinctly follows the poetry of Verlaine and Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Almost all of Shao Xunmei's poetry is infused with the same subject, namely aestheticism, narcissism, carnal desire and expressions of instinct. As he himself admitted: "One's time on earth is but a short sojourn, arriving and departing in an instant, not giving one a second to pause, so one must do one's utmost to enjoy the pleasure that one beholds. Rather than being a spent candle, one's own body having been used by others, it is better to be a cloud and to conjure up an infinite number of mysterious symbolic forms. Although you will eventually disperse and disappear, it will be so much more interesting than the fate of the candle."[11]

As to form, Shao Xunmei pursued a freely flamboyant cadence, meter and style. We can take as an example the overture to his signature work *Flower-like Evil*:

> I also know that everything in this world has an end,
> Eventually, the yawning/extending leaves break the loneliness of the forest.
> Once sleeping like death, but awake in an instant,
> Could it be the allure of color, the incitement of sound, the evil of touch?
> These ruinous destinies, this muddied and degenerate soul,
> Like an abandoned corpse draped haplessly across the desolate bowels of the earth;
> Or perhaps to drown in the ocean and be picked over by sea creatures,
> Ah, better to be charcoal and ignite this ice-cold human existence.[12]

His epic poem *Xunmei's Dream* also amply demonstrated his pursuits of this type. The renowned poet Chen Mengjia notes: "Shao Xunmei's poetry is gentle and beautiful, enchanting like the spring of March or February and as stunning as a gorgeous beauty…" and that his praise for the beauty of a woman in *Xunmei's Dream* was like "A piece of jadeite, actually able to speak and offering compliments to another piece of jadeite."

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[10]"Shi ershiwushou—zixu".

[11]"Zeiku yu shengmiao zhijian de xintu," see *Huo yu rou* (Shanghai: Jinwushudian, 1928), p. 59.

[12]*Hua yibande zui'e—xuqu*, Jinwushudian, 1928.

In sum, as soon as the fluorescence of Shao Xunmei and the group of end-of-century aestheticist–decadents centered around him appeared on China's literary stage, in the middle of the 1930s the war of resistance against Japan broke out and, whether it be "odes to beauty and love" or sensual pleasure, everything became surreal and vanished like smoke into thin air. Whilst they were unlike their foreign forebears such as Baudelaire, Verlaine, Dowson, and Moore who bequeathed a body of immortal works which convincingly reflected the times, Shao Xunmei and his colleagues were nevertheless witnesses to history and their works provided a brilliant end-of-an-era image of the bustling and cosmopolitan international metropolis that was Shanghai, bearing witness to the fact that the international end-of-century tide of decadence had also graced this place and provided a fascinating reference for us now similarly poised at this end-of-century juncture.

As for these sophisticates who for a time stirred up some billows on the Shanghai literary stage, what was the fate of Shao Xunmei with his reputation as a "dandy"? After 1949 he opened the Era Bookstore on Shanghai's Central Sichuan Road for a time and published a considerable number of works which disseminated materials relevant to the early period of Marxism, however they were mostly works by figures from the Second Communist International which the official press did not publish, such as Karl Johann Kautsky, and he was soon criticized severely by *People's Daily* and the bookshop collapsed. In 1958 as the "counter-revolutionary purge" continued, he was labeled a "spy" in the "dredge deep and thoroughly" movement and was imprisoned, one of the justifications being that he had participated in "Spy-master" Zhang Daofan's "spy network," which was in fact Zhang Yang's short-lived Paris end-of-century decadent "Heavenly Dog Society" mentioned above. Another justification was a love affair. In the 1930s, when Shao Xunmei's enterprise was at its peak, an American author by the name of Emily Hahn had an affair with Shao Xunmei. Shao Xunmei seldom raised this matter afterwards, but Hahn's continued publication of such "autobiographical novels" as *My Chinese Husband*, and *China to Me: A Partial Autobiography* amplified the matter considerably. In 1957 Shao Xunmei suddenly remembered this former lover and wrote her a letter, asking if she could assist a friend who was planning to travel to Hong Kong. This letter was unfortunately intercepted by the Customs Department and became the "iron rod" of proof of his crimes.

Because Shao Xunmei had shared a cell with Mr. Jia Zhifang who had been implicated in the Hu Feng affair and imprisoned, according to Mr. Jia's memoirs, when faced with the unbearable hunger that he experienced there, Shao Xunmei's most frequent reverie was the time when he had opened Shanghai's largest Western-style restaurant, the "Superb Aroma" in Shanghai's Park Hotel and where he, born in the year of the tiger, would every year on his birthday order a tiger cake as big as a real tiger and hold a banquet. While in prison, he contracted asthma seriously, however "his natural disposition was to be active and so every time the prison floor had to be scrubbed, he would rush to volunteer to do it. Panting heavily and stooping to the task, he would be on all fours, mopping the floor and his fellow

prisoners would tease him as 'the old tractor'."[13] When he despaired of being released from prison, he urged Mr. Jia to commit to write an article for him, clarifying two matters: one was in 1933 when George Bernard Shaw visited Shanghai, he, as the Chinese secretary of PEN International, was responsible for hosting him and that he personally paid for a banquet which he convened in his honor, but the news reports in the newspapers at the time, no matter whether small or large, all omitted to mention his name and he felt that this was unfair. The second matter was that his articles were really and truly his own work. Lu Xun accused him of paying someone to write them for him and he felt that this was truly an injustice of epic proportions.

In 1962 Professor Zhou Xuliang from Fudan University came to Beijing to attend a conference and Zhou Yang enquired about Shao Xunmei and discovered that he was still serving time in prison and said: "Why should it be so? If there is no serious problem, he should be let out." After Zhou Xuliang returned to Shanghai he relayed Zhou Yang's words to the Head of Shanghai's Propaganda Department, Shi Ximin, and Shao Xunmei was released and returned home.[14] Mr. Jia did not know when Shao Xunmei was released. He only knew that after his release his life was extremely difficult. He and his wife were confined to a tiny dwelling and that "they had even sold their bed and were sleeping on the floor".

In 1968, China's last decadent school aestheticist poet Shao Xunmei departed this world amidst poverty and ill health.

[13]Jia Zhifang, *Yuli yuwai* (Shanghai: Yuandong chubanshe, 1995), p. 184.

[14]Zhao Yiheng: "Shao Xunmei: Zhongguo zui hou yige weimeizhuyizhe", quoted in *Baixiangtu zhai*, 1999, Issue 2, p. 7.

Chapter 14
Nietzsche and Modern Chinese Literature

14.1 I

In the early years of the twentieth century, due to a series of political, economic, and cultural changes, all kinds of intellectual trends rushed into a stagnant and backward China, the extent and profusion of which, along with the depth and complexity of their influence, had rarely been seen in the history of world culture. The mutual influences and permeation of Eastern and Western cultures centered on China had, by this time, already become a focus of recent global scholarly research on the development of culture and ideology. From 1954 onwards, after Harvard University published John King Fairbank's *China's Response to the West*, the number of treatises and special works addressing this type of research had been growing by the day. Some of the more significant works include A.R. Davis' *China's Entry into World Literature* (1967), Jaroslav Prusek's *The Antithesis between Traditional Eastern Literature and Modern Western Literature in the Process of the Chinese Literary Revolution* (1964), Bonnie S. McDougall's *The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China, 1919–1925* (1971), etc.. In 1974 in the US state of Massachusetts, the international conference on "Modern Chinese literature in the May Fourth Era" further delivered many specialist articles on the influence on China's modern literature by Western literary trends as well as Russian and Japanese literature (see the 1977 Harvard publication of the conference papers, *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*). Unfortunately our research in this area is still extremely underdeveloped, and even though there has been some work done, it has invariably been to a greater or lesser extent fettered by metaphysics. The objective achievements of some thinkers and artists have, for political reasons, been dismissed out of hand; the influence that they have so demonstrably had also been entirely obliterated, to the extent that good influences have been deemed bad or that such-and-such an influence has been attributed to the weakness or mistakes in the thinking of the individuals being influenced and no attempt has been made to analyze the factors that gave rise to

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such influences. When the same thinker or artist at a certain historical juncture has a positive influence but at another time, a negative one, the treatment is still the same. This hinders us from comprehensively recognizing the original face of history and from attempting a true evaluation of objectively existing historical phenomenon. This paper attempts to address the relationship between the German thinker Nietzsche and modern Chinese literature and to conduct some preliminary analyses of these types of questions.

The thought and works of Nietzsche (1844–1900) mainly took shape in the 1970s and 1980s. This was a time when capitalism had begun to transform into monopoly capitalism and although the revolutionary movement of the Paris commune had met with defeat, still it had had a tremendous influence, and it was a time when Marxism was spreading broadly. Nietzsche's thought can be generalized as the "reevaluation of everything," the philosophy of the Superman and the will to power. He fundamentally exposed the hypocrisy and evil of capitalist society and clearly announced that "God is dead" and that we must thoroughly smash all idols and traditions of the past and reassesses our values. His philosophy of the Superman argued that because of the oppression of society and the trivialization brought about by the division of labor, man has been distorted and deformed, dismembered, and crushed. Thus we must transcend the ordinary man (including transcending one's own internal mediocrity), and become a healthy and whole new human race or Superhuman. What is more, only a handful of geniuses are able to achieve this state and the vast majority of the population is but his servants or tools. Thus any development in terms of strength or consciousness of popular ideology is seen as a barrier and a threat to the maturation of the Superman. Nietzsche also held that the most resolute and noble quality of the human will lies not in the petty struggle for survival but in the will to fight and the will to power. He argues that this type of impulse for power is the only basic impulse and that the ideologies and behaviors which this engenders are all reasonable and noble. Nietzsche eventually died insane and all throughout his works there is a lack of logical proof. However, they are abstruse and distinctive and full of convincing analogies and symbolism. There are also a considerable number of formulations on some of the more difficult aspects of the subconscious which are not short on the delirious ravings of a madman. His doctrines are rich and disparate, brimming with complex contradictions yet containing a considerable number of valuable insights. More than 30 years ago, the young Chinese revolutionary Ai Siqi pointed out that "Nietzsche's idealism was an exposé of the debased and corrupt materialism of the parasitic capitalist class during their waning years," and that Nietzsche's extreme individualism was also "a protest at the sham democracy of the bourgeoisie who manipulated social life under the guise of a false majority."[1] These valuable insights are the basis for why Nietzsche was so influential in China around the "May Fourth" period.

[1]Ai Siqi, "Lu Xun xiansheng zaoqi duiyu zhexue de gongxian" , see *Lu Xun yanjiu congkan*, Vol. 1, p. 31, Lu Xun wenhua chubanshe.

Nietzsche was first introduced to China as an author. His influence on the Chinese literary scene was far deeper and earlier than it was in the philosophical sphere. In 1904 when Wang Guowei first introduced Nietzsche, he first stressed how he "used his incomparable literary talent to promote his theories," pointing out how the aim of Nietzsche's theories was to "smash the old culture and create a new one" in order to "loosen its burden" (meaning the burden of old tradition) and "subvert all values" and "not be afraid to rebel." He praised him as having an "extremely strong will which is supplemented by an outstanding intellect," that "his tall and imposing stature in the spiritual world was such that even the great ancient emperors, Qin Shihuang and Han Wudi, or Genghis Kahn and Napoleon would be inclined to take a backward step."[2] Not long afterwards, Lu Xun, in several articles he wrote whilst in Japan, praised Nietzsche as a "distinguished extreme individualist," a "genius" who was not afraid to cross his contemporaries with his broad and penetrating thought and academic achievements. In 1915, in his dedication on the occasion of the launch of *New Youth* magazine entitled "My message to the youth," Chen Duxiu quoted Nietzsche's discourse on slave morality and aristocratic virtue in his first point, using it as a weapon to oppose feudal rule, and stressed: "Loyalty, filial piety, chastity, and righteousness are the morality of a slave; light punishment and taxes are a slave's good fortune; singing the praises of a tyrant is a slave's literature; noble titles and fiefdoms are a slave's honor, and monuments are a slave's memorial." According to him, a slave is someone who must defer to others on what is right and wrong, honorable, and disgraceful; a person who loses his independent subjectivity and sense of equality; he loses his dignity completely and is unable to exercise his own will. On the first of January, 1917, Cai Yuanpei in his welcoming lecture to the Political Studies Society mentioned "while Nietzsche (a great German man of letters) reinvented the theory of evolution… the weak fear for their survival and so resist the strong and thus the world is able to begin to evolve day to day."[3] In February 1918, Chen Duxiu in his *The True Meaning of Life* again repeatedly stressed Nietzsche's proposition that we should "respect the will of the individual and promote individual talent and become a great artist or great entrepreneur and be known as a Superman, a cut above the common man. This is life's purpose and all the traditional virtues are but a ruse."[4] Obviously, before "May Fourth," Nietzsche was already widely known to many. He had been introduced into China as a great literary figure and the dissemination of his philosophy acted as a vigorous precursor to the great tide of the antifeudal democratic revolution.

After the "May Fourth" movement, Nietzsche's works were disseminated even more widely amongst literary circles. In the very month that the "May Fourth" demonstrations occurred, Fu Sinian issued a clarion call in the pages of the *New Tide* magazine: "We must raise our lanterns and search our streets for the Superman and, grasping sticks, scour the streets to attack the devils," praising Nietzsche as an

[2]Wang Guowei, "Shubenhua yu Nicai", see *Jing'an wenji*.

[3]Carried in *Xin qingnian* [New Youth], Vol. 2, Issue 5.

[4]Carried in *Xin qingnian* [New Youth], Vol. 4, Issue 2.

"extreme destroyer of idols."[5] In September of that same year, Tian Han introduced in detail in *Young China* Nietzsche's early work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, stressing especially "life is more vexed, therefore we must be stronger-willed" and sally forth into battle.[6] Closely following this, Shen Yanbing published translations of two of the most critical chapters of Nietzsche's seminal work *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, namely *The New Idol* and *Flies in the Market-place* in the magazine *Liberation and Reform*, in the introduction to which he was full of effusive praise: "Nietzsche is a grand literatus and his pen is acerbic. His language is often shocking. Just look at his *Also Sprach Zarathustra*; it is a rarity in the field of literature."[7] At the beginning of 1920, he went on to write a long piece entitled *The Doctrines of Nietzsche*, comprehensively introducing and critiquing Nietzsche's thought which was published across four issues of Volume 7 of the magazine *Students*. In August that same year, *Mindui* magazine published a special issue on Nietzsche, roundly introducing Nietzsche and denouncing the accusation that Nietzsche was the chief culprit of the European war. In September, *New Tide*, Volume 2 Issue 5 published Lu Xun's translation of the introduction to *Also Sprach Zarathustra*,[8] which included Lu Xun's explanatory notes to every section of the introduction, pointing out that "Although Nietzsche's essays are superb, this book is peppered with words of admonition and from the outside many contradictions can be noted, therefore it is not easy to comprehend." During this period, Lu Xun regularly quoted from Nietzsche's essays or drew on Nietzsche's ideology to analyze a question, but what he drew from Nietzsche, when compared to around 1907, was already markedly different. At this time Guo Moruo was also fascinated by Nietzsche. At one stage when he discovered that a certain Shanghai foreign bookshop unexpectedly did not have Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo*, he cursed the bookshop as being a "wastebasket."[9] In 1923, he translated the whole of section one of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and the first section of part two which *Creation Weekly* published sequentially in 39 parts. "Initially, I translated a section every week and I quite enjoyed it," but later he felt that "the reaction was poor," so he suspended his work. But later, when he happened to visit a remote hamlet to the Southeast of Wu County in Jiangsu to attend the wedding of a primary school teacher, the first thing the bride said to him was: "I love Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Why don't you finish translating it?" So obviously the reaction was not poor, and Guo Moruo urged him: "If I had known that there were people like Liangcai's wife who were so sympathetic, then I really should not have abandoned the task mid-way."[10]

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[5]Fu Sinian, "Suiganlu," in *Xinchao*, Vol. 1, Issue 5.

[6]See *Shaonian Zhongguo*, Vol. 1, Issue 3.

[7]See *Jiefang yu gaizai* [Liberation and Reform], Vol. 1, Issues 6 and 7.

[8]Before this time, Lu Xun had already translated the more important parts of this foreword using classical Chinese. See *"Chaluodusideluo rushishuo" yi gao*, folio 1, currently housed in the Peking Library.

[9]*Moruo wenji*, Vol. 7, p. 399.

[10]Ibid., pp. 261–262.

After 1925, as the revolutionary terrain expanded vigorously, the broad masses of workers and peasants along with a great number of intellectuals had already discovered a road to revolution that fitted with China's society and they threw themselves vigorously into the antiimperialist and antifeudal flood and as a result, Nietzsche's influence gradually weakened and withered away. As Guo Moruo noted, "At that time (1926), Nietzsche had long since disappeared from the center of our consciousness."[11] By this stage, the road and direction of the Chinese revolution were blatantly obvious, and to pause again and demand "We need the strength to move, to cry out wildly, to push forward, attack, defend and kill"[12] was no longer able to move hearts like it had during the early period of the "May Fourth" era. Thus, between 1925 and 1926, the Kuang Biao (Hurricane) Society, centered around Gao Changhong and Xiang Peiliang, adopted "The Voice of Nietzsche" as their "clarion call to advance," "calling on people to prepare for the advent of the 'Superman'" and regularly "drafted Nietzsche-style mutually unintelligible articles loaded with maxims," the reactions to which were truly vacuous and poor. Nevertheless, what they adapted from Nietzsche still rooted out all old traditional fetters and removed all barriers standing in the way of becoming a man of steel. This delineated them in terms of their essence from the *Intrigues of the Warring States* School at the beginning of the 1940s who promoted Nietzsche's ideology. Finally, in 1930, in his embitterment at the traditional powers and saddened and dejected by the defeat of the revolution, Yu Dafu translated seven of Nietzsche's love letters under the title *One Aspect of the Superman* and praised Nietzsche's abstinence and his lonely and unbending soul.[13] In this atmosphere of white terror, Nietzsche continued to appear before the readers as a defiant, independent, and rebellious figure.

However, by the 1940s, due to the change in the political situation in both China and the world, Nietzsche played a completely different role with a completely different face in China. Around 1940, at the height of the savagery of the international fascists and the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek toward the Communist Party and the people, Nietzsche's doctrines had been used and transformed by the Nazis to become the theoretical basis for their fascism. At this time, the so-called *Intrigues of the Warring States* School appeared on China's literary stage. They exalted Nietzsche as the "most advanced, most revolutionary, most idealistic political thinker" of the times and that his works were "symbols of grandiloquent vitality," "the acme of life," and "the pure flame of creation."[14] The semimonthly *Intrigues of the Warring States* and the weekly *Warring States* which they published successively carried such articles as "The Thought of Nietzsche," "Nietzsche's Political Thought." "On Hero Worship," "More on Hero Worship," "The Character and Thought of the German People," "Wildfire Buffets Literature,"

[11]Ibid.

[12]Xiang Peiliang, "Shuipingxian xia", in *Kuangbiao* (irregular), Issue 1.

[13]Yu Dafu, "Chaoren de yimian," in *Duancan ji*.

[14]Lin Tongji, "Preface to *Cong Shubenha dao Nicai*," (Shanghai: Dadongshuju, 1946).

"The Nationalist Literary Movement," "Power," "The Strong Man," and more. Apart from these, they also published such special volumes or collections as *From Schopenhauer to Nietzsche*, *New Trends in Literary Criticism*, or *Waves of the Times*, vigorously promoting Nietzsche's thought, "attempting to use these ideas of Nietzsche to build a theory of literature for the Warring States group,"[15] which neatly initiated an upsurge of interest in Nietzsche. To them, Nietzsche was their ultimate idol, as well as defender of reactionary regimes, warmonger, and powerful weapon for oppressing the masses.

From the brief summary above, it can be seen that Nietzsche indeed had a definite influence on China's modern literature and that this influence varied with the changing times and with political expediency. Before the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, people found a "genius" of great will and intelligence in Nietzsche, a heroic individual in which they could entrust their hopes to save China from its peril. Around "May Fourth," Nietzsche was, in people's eyes, the glorious idol wrecker who would smash all old traditions. He would help people challenge the feudal despotism of several millennia and incentivize the weak to strive ceaselessly to strengthen themselves (although this was not Nietzsche's original idea). After 1927, as the revolutionary situation developed, the advanced ideological circles already rarely mentioned Nietzsche. By the 1940s, in response to the political requirements of the Nationalist fascist regime, Nietzsche was again spread widely among a section of the intelligentsia in the areas controlled by the Nationalists. But how Nietzsche's ideology was interpreted during this time, whether in terms of aim, method or social effect, was sharply different from what it was during the "May Fourth" period. So it can be seen that for an external ideology to be able to have an influence domestically and what kind of an influence it might have, depends first of all on the internal requirements of the era and of the politics, and whole-scale adoption or unconditional transplantation is not really possible. Below we will further probe the development and concrete conditions of this influence by analyzing the relationship between Nietzsche and several representative figures of the literary world.

14.2 II

The relationship between Lu Xun and Nietzsche in terms of ideology is obvious. To rashly generalize Lu Xun as "promoting Nietzsche's doctrines and the Wei-Jin writing style" or revere him as "China's Nietzsche" is obviously incorrect. However to ignore such a relationship or to call this relationship a mistake or weakness or an unfortunate association of Lu Xun's or to say that Nietzsche only had a negative or reactionary influence on Lu Xun or even to say that the points of obvious

[15]Ouyang Fanhai, "Shenmo shi Zhanguopai de wenyi" , carried in *Chunzhong*, 1943, April issue.

congruence between Lu Xun and Nietzsche are a criticism of Nietzsche, also runs counter to historical reality.

As early as 1939, Tang Tao argued: "I believe that Lu Xun went from Ji Kang's anger at the world and Nietzsche's Superman, combined with the theory of evolution, to move on to the theory of class revolution."[16] In 1946 Guo Moruo pointed out in his article "Lu Xun and Wang Guowei": "The two had been fascinated by Nietzsche," and stresses: "It cannot be ignored that the two both passed through a romantic period. Wang Guowei loved the German romantic group's philosophy and art and Lu Xun also liked Nietzsche. Nietzsche was fundamentally a romantic." They have both accurately seen the relationship between Lu Xun and Nietzsche's ideology as an important characteristic of Lu Xun's ideology at a certain time in its development.

Nietzsche's influence on Lu Xun's ideology before and after "May Fourth" is not exactly the same. Before "May Fourth," China's intellectuals rushed to find in the West the truth that would save the nation and its people. The advanced individuals in their midst could not but notice the gradual decline of the West's bourgeois civilization. As Lenin. pointed out: China's militant democratic ideology was first of all "bound together with helping China avoid taking the capitalist road; in other words, blocking the desires of capitalism."[17] While Lu Xun was studying in Japan, "Nietzsche's ideology, even his philosophy of the will, was ubiquitous amongst the Japanese scholarly community."[18] Nietzsche's criticism of the vulgarity and devastation of bourgeois civilization and his stubborn quest for "innovation" quickly attracted Lu Xun's attention. However, at the time Lu Xun did not see Nietzsche's ideology as a comprehensive system to be studied and accepted, nor did he complete a thorough study of the temporal background that gave rise to Nietzsche's ideology, nor its social utility. He merely took "what he needed" from Nietzsche's ideology, that part which aroused a sympathetic response within him or which accorded with his own aspirations, and he applied the doctrines according to his own personal comprehension of them. We can be certain that Lu Xun failed to fully read many of Nietzsche's works, and especially such later works as *The Will to Power*.

Lu Xun's sociopolitical ideology is displayed in a focused manner in his work *Concerning Imbalanced Cultural Development.*[19] The main thrust of this essay is that it is ok to absorb the material civilization of the West, but it would be extremely dangerous to "elevate and introduce into China" or "burn incense and kowtow in homage before" "those things already considered outmoded in other parts of the

[16]Tang Tao, "Lu Xun de zagan", carried in the inaugural issue of *Lu Xun feng*.

[17]*Liening quanji*, Vol. 18, p. 154.

[18]Guo Moruo, "Lu Xun yu Wang Guowei", in *Moruo wenji*, Vol. 12, p. 535.

[19]Lu Xun, "Wenhua pianzhilun" [Concerning Imbalanced Cultural Development]. Translated by Jon Eugene von Kowallis in *Warriors of the Spirit: Lu Xun's Early wenyan Essays* (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies, China Research Monograph Series, forthcoming).

world."[20] Lu Xun believed that what was "imbalanced" in nineteenth century Western civilization were "materialism" and "the majority." The former referred to the fact that "In their rush to adopt the 'objective' standards of the material world, people were ready to discard the subjective inner spiritual realm with no further thought whatsoever."[21] A considerable number of people had abandoned their erstwhile glorious acuity and been seduced by material desires, hence "deceit and vice took the opportunity and sprouted," until finally "society was bled white and progress was halted."[22] The latter, meanwhile, referred to "Those who conform are deemed in the right and those who stand alone, in the wrong,"[23] and "The tyranny of the majority over any sector of the populace who maintain independent views,"[24] ignoring the creativity and individuality of the individual and "demoting the outstanding," will inevitably result in "the vulgar and crass abounding"[25] and "the entire population will founder in mediocrity."[26] Lu Xun believed that the reason why Western ideology underwent tremendous changes during the final years of the nineteenth century was because the "major figures and philosophers" wanted to "completely defeat" the "rectification of nineteenth century civilization," "[t]hereupon, enthusiasm developed for a movement that could combine many forces into one great tide, utilizing the powers of insurgency and destruction to launch a full-scale attack on the long-accepted [notions of] civilization, sweeping them away in the hope of obtaining a new life."[27] Of these "major figures and philosophers," Lu Xun spoke more frequently of Nietzsche's "depth of insight and ability to discern the falsity and the imbalances of modern civilization."[28] In this essay, Lu Xun quoted from Nietzsche's seminal work *Also Sprach Zarathustra*: "But when I turned back to gaze on the world of the present I saw [your] civilized nations with their motley societies. As societies they are characterized by a lack of firm faith, peopled by beings with no intellectual creativity. In a nation like this, how can I remain?"[29] "A lack of firm faith" refers to a sole emphasis on the material and a lack of resolute spiritual conviction, while "no intellectual creativity" refers to the considerable number of people who follow the crowd blindly and lack a creative spirit. This passage from Nietzsche is the reason why Lu Xun summarized the root of the malaise of nineteenth century civilization as "materialism" and "the majority."

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[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid. (adapted).

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid. (adapted).

[29]Ibid. Von Wallis notes: Lu Xun's version of this passage from *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1883–1885) is probably based on a Japanese language translation of the German original, or an even further–moved Japanese translation of the English version. Whether the clause is a free translation or Lu Xun's own interpretation of the text, some discrepancy exists.

How then to root out this malaise? What Lu Xun suggested was: "We should repudiate material [istic trends] and stress the development of the native intelligence of the human mind, relying on the [potential of the] individual and dismissing [the relevance of] sheer numbers."[30] "Development of the native intelligence" meant to stress the full utilization of people's innate subjective spirit and staunch willpower such that they are able to "bravely struggle," "despite the endless hurdles and myriad reversals, he is finally able to achieve his ideals."[31] Lu Xun reviewed the historical process of development and progress of this proposition and finally concluded: "Nietzsche and Ibsen who, on the basis of their own convictions, defied the conventions of their day, illustrate a culmination of the subjectivist tendency,"[32] and that the highest ideal lay in "the Superman, the might of whose will to mastery gave him near-divine powers"[33] which Nietzsche sought, along with Ibsen's creation of "strong characters who… [were possessed of] a firm resolve to do battle that remained undaunted even in the face of massive opposition."[34] "Relying on the [potential of the] individual" means opposition to ignoring individual characteristics and advocating the full utilization of individuality and the creative spirit of the individual. Lu Xun traced back the source of the development of individuality since the nineteenth century and from the extreme individualism of Max Stirner to Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Ibsen until he finally concluded with Nietzsche: "This brings the discussion to Nietzsche, the most prominent champion of individualism."[35]

From the above, it can be seen that Lu Xun's philosophy of "repudiat[ing] material[istic trends] and stress[ing] the development of the native intelligence of the human mind, relying on the [potential of the] individual and dismissing [the relevance of] sheer numbers" was obviously based on Nietzsche's thinking and at the same time also returned to the same point as Nietzsche had. It is worth noting that Lu Xun accepted Nietzsche's ideology as a type of weapon with the intention of rescuing his mortally endangered motherland. The questions that he faced were first of all, how to liberate himself and his compatriots from the oppression of imperialism and feudalism. Meanwhile, Nietzsche lived in a strong capitalist nation which was transitioning toward monopoly imperialism and the problems that he faced were, first of all, how to contain the mass revolutionary movement that was growing by the day. This meant that while Lu Xun adopted Nietzsche's slogans and utilized some of Nietzsche's ideological forms, nevertheless in terms of aim and content, he was completely different to Nietzsche. For example, the aim of Lu Xun's advocacy of "respecting individuality" was to smash the then mass turmoil of "thousands of voices calling in unison, calling, but not in a considered fashion."

[30]Ibid. (Von Wallis).
[31]Ibid.
[32]ibid.
[33]ibid.
[34]ibid.
[35]ibid.

He sought to offer every individual the ability to think for themselves and to come up with their own individual ideas. "If everyone has their own self-awareness" then "the collective mass awakening will be so much nearer" (from *Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices*). He advocated "nurturing the intellect and spirit"[36] which meant he looked forward to the day when "the wonderful citizens of this ancient land" would develop an indomitable will and then "amidst the gales and angry waves," "forge a path to survival." Lu Xun believed that the number of people who were truly capable of respecting individuality and expanding their spirit was not great, "I cherish the hope that one or two scholars will take a stand, setting an example for the rest."[37] But the masses could learn from them and the ultimate aim remained for a "grand awakening of the masses." Lu Xun explicitly indicated the path to national salvation: "the primary task is to establish the people. Once the people are established, all things will be possible. As for the method to bring this about, it lies precisely in respect for individuality and the nurturing of intellect and spirit."[38] The only path was to "lead the people of our nation to achieve self-awareness [and] develop individuality," "so as to transform this country of loose sand into a nation of human beings."[39] "When [the] nation of human beings is established, we will become capable of mighty and unprecedented achievements, elevating us to a unique position of dignity and respect in the world."[40] This was the youthful Lu Xun's highest ideal. It can be seen that although Lu Xun accepted Nietzsche's Superman doctrine and that he, like Nietzsche, believed that "Only with the appearance of a Superman can the world be governed ideally. If this is not possible, then we should entrust governance to the most outstanding of our luminaries,"[41] and "rather than force the enlightened and wise to trail after the common and mediocre, would it not be better to disregard the masses and place our hopes instead upon the enlightened and wise?"[42] But Lu Xun's Superman and his "enlightened and wise" are the small number of individuals who were wise before their time and their task was to broadly awaken the masses to consciousness and aspiration. This is obviously fundamentally different from Nietzsche's ideal of striving to consolidate the control of the tiny minority over the vast majority of the population, but it cannot be denied that Lu Xun's philosophy of "respect for individuality and the nurturing of intellect and spirit"[43] did indeed hail from the new idealism and voluntarism of the last years of the nineteenth century, and especially from Nietzsche. But no matter what the influence of this ideology was at what time and in what place, at this time and this place it did indeed have a vigorous and

[36]Ibid.
[37]Von Kowallis, Lu Xun "Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices", p. 40.
[38]Von Kowallis,"Lu Xun: *Concerning Imbalanced Cultural Development.*"
[39]Ibid.
[40]Ibid.
[41]Ibid.
[42]Ibid.
[43]Ibid.

progressive influence on Lu Xun himself. It enabled him to break through the shenanigans of the Westernization Group's "clamor… for the acquisition of modern weaponry"[44] and the Reformists' concentration on creating a national body to frame a constitution, and to realize that the crux of national salvation was in awakening the consciousness of the people, and so he threw himself into the glorious enterprise of transforming the minds of the citizens. Before Marxism had spread widely in China, this type of thinking and declamation of Lu Xun entitled him to stand shoulder to shoulder with the ranks of the most advanced thinkers.

Around the time of the "May Fourth" movement, Lu Xun, who had experienced the Xinhai Revolution and been encouraged by the October Revolution, underwent a significant advance in terms of ideology. Although he never broke off his intellectual relationship with Nietzsche, nevertheless, what he selected from Nietzsche was already quite different from his former period.

In fact, Lu Xun could see that the deep-rooted practice of China's tradition was too profound and that even a small reform would unavoidably require a major sacrifice. "No matter what a Chinese person may say or do, it will invariably be in conflict to some extent with the deep-rooted practice of tradition," so therefore "one cannot avoid being labeled an innovator and not allowed to speak or indeed become a great transgressor, unreasonable, not to be tolerated," to such an extent that "one becomes an utter outcast." Thus he argued that if one were to determine to become a reformer, a smasher of idols, then one must, like Nietzsche, not fear isolation. Not only "must you ignore the curses of the protectors of the idols" but you must also "be immune to their flattery as well." He quoted specifically a passage from *The Flies in the Market-Place* in Nietzsche's seminal work *Also Sprach Zarathustra* where he admonishes the reader: "They buzz around thee also with their praise: obtrusiveness, is their praise. They want to be close to thy skin and thy blood."[45] (Later Lu Xun urged China's youth: "You must always simply march on. Pay no attention to the sneering and back-stabbing." They must be like the sea that Nietzsche speaks of, "able to accommodate your prodigious contempt.")[46] In his *After Translating* Rabachii Shevyeev,[47] Lu Xun says that Shevyeev does demonstrate the "Nietzschean strong man style" and that this "strongman flavor" makes full use of the will and strength to fight throughout life, to rebel and to perish. Some of the images that Lu Xun created in *Wild Grass*, such as the "passing stranger" who was "wounded badly and lost a lot of blood" and who clearly knew that the road ahead was not a field of wild lilies or Japanese roses but who still, despite hunger and thirst, exhaustion and want, continues to stride forward "through the wasteland," "head held high, struggling on." All that can be seen is "a slight nod, a host of banners and all manner of vestments," "but with gun held high," "finally he

[44]Ibid.

[45]Quoted from http://www.literaturepage.com/read/thusspakezarathustra–59.html [viewed 28/4/2015].

[46]"Suiganlu di sishiyi".

[47]Work by M. Artsybashev. See Artsybashev, *Sobrainie Sochinenii*, vol. 3, pp. 261–361.

ages and perishes in the wasteland." "This type of soldier," alone, holding aloft a gun, and infused with the spirit of Nietzsche's strongman, is the ideological embodiment of Lu Xun's philosophy of the resilient will that he believed China especially required in these special circumstances.

In addition, at this time Lu Xun adopted an even more obviously critical attitude toward Nietzsche than he had in former times. If we accept that Lu Xun's view in 1907 was that: "the world will not become peaceful until a Superman is born," then by 1919 he already felt that Nietzsche's Superman was "too nebulous." Nevertheless, Lu Xun failed to deny Nietzsche's Superman doctrine completely. The emphasis in this statement of his is clearly his "belief that noble and near-perfect human beings will appear in the future." Where Lu Xun parts company with Nietzsche is in the fact that he believes that it is not necessary to wait for that "torch," but rather we should "do what we can, say what we can, shine if we have warmth. Like summoning a fairy light; it can shine some light into the darkness." (*Random Jottings* no. 41) Lu Xun had already criticized his own previous acceptance of Nietzsche's philosophy of "ignoring the masses and placing one's hopes on the sagely," believing that the most realistic and promising prospect was if all were able to offer up their own albeit weak power. If we say that in the earlier period, under Lu Xun and Nietzsche's congruent ideology, there were differences in aim and content, then given the social conditions at the time of "May Four," this divergence increased and that Lu Xun broke from Nietzsche even further. But this is not to say that Lu Xun had already abandoned Nietzsche—far from it. He even argued that his ideology of giving full expression to the abilities and determination of the individual, of shining a light where there is the passion to do so, was an extension of Nietzsche's. In 1930, whilst reflecting on his relationship with the magazine *Yusi* (Threads), he noted: "I did not need to hesitate for long because by that time we still had some of the fallout from reading Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. I only needed to squeeze out—and indeed I do really mean squeeze out—an essay, so I did. I only had to be able to produce a little 'dynamite,' so I did." (*The Truth About Me and* Yusi) Here "fallout" obviously refers to the spirit of "do what you can; say what you can; if you have warmth, then shine." Not only was this so, but some of the works during this period of Lu Xun's career, and especially those in *Wild Grass*, no matter whether in terms of conceptualization, composition, or form, the shadow of Nietzsche's *Also Spake Zarathrustra* invariably fell, either covertly or overtly. There is no point in making an external comparison of the works of the two men, however when we come across the image of that "shadow" that "eventually vacillates between light and darkness … wandering alone and far from home in an unknown time" which Lu Xun created in "The Shadow's Farewell" in *Weeds*, Nietzsche's other "emaciated, dark, hollow and destitute" "shadow" that has had "a dreadful day" and which needs to "be wary of the even more dreadful night [that is pending]" will emerge before our mind's eye. When we read Lu Xun's statement: "Could it be that the external youth has also died and the entire world's young people have all grown old? … But the youth are at peace," we are also

unconsciously reminded of Nietzsche's "Those young hearts have all become old already—and not even old; only weary, ordinary, and comfortable."[48] Despite the fact that the content and ideology of these works is not completely identical, nevertheless this type of subtle connection in terms of artistic expression is truly palpable.

The total rupture between Lu Xun and Nietzsche did not occur until after the 1930s. In 1929, in his *To the Readers of* On the Historical Tides in Art History, he continued to name Nietzsche and Goethe along with Marx as great individuals, and in 1930, in *Hard Translation and the Class Nature of Literature*, he expressed his deep regret that only half of Nietzsche's works had been translated into Chinese. Nevertheless, by 1934, when Lu Xun wrote *The Take-Over Policy*, his attitude toward Nietzsche had undergone a very clear change. He says: "Nietzsche boasted that he was the sun, possessing illimitable light and heat, endlessly giving without receiving from others. But Nietzsche was not the sun after all—he was simply crazy."[49] When compared to his attitudes during the "May Fourth" period, this displays a marked departure from his previous stance on Nietzsche's ideology and sentiments, his standpoint and his attitude. In the following year, in his Preface to the second volume of fiction in the series *Compendium of New Literature*, Lu Xun analyzes this issue further, pointing out that there were only two escape routes for Nietzsche's Superman philosophy: one was "insanity and death" and the other was "to be reconciled to emptiness or to resist emptiness, even though he in his loneliness hasn't the 'last man's' will to seek out warmth, but just to despise all authority and be eventually reduced to a nihilist." In this piece, Lu Xun not only criticized Nietzsche's philosophy, but at the same time he criticized that type of "maxim-style" essay that was "mutually unintelligible." This demonstrates Lu Xun's break with Nietzsche's philosophy. But this does not deny the possibility of Lu Xun occasionally utilizing some of Nietzsche's ideological formations in order to illustrate a point. For example, in 1933 in *From Deafness to Dumbness*, Lu Xun employed Nietzsche's concept of "the last man [German: *der letzte Mensch*]" to illustrate the fact that "Children brought up on husks will never be strong, and future achievements will be yet more insignificant, like *der letzte Mensch* described by Nietzsche."[50] He ranted vehemently, accusing the reactionaries in the following terms: "They want to stop young people's ears and turn their deafness into dumbness, so that they wither away and become *der letzte Mensch*."[51]

From the above it can be seen that the early Lu Xun adopted Nietzsche's new idealism and voluntarism as his ideal, but his aim was for China to avoid the flaws of capitalism, reform the spirit of his compatriots, and advocate energetic

[48]Kaufmann, Walter (trans.), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (New York: Viking, 1966). Zarathustra's Speeches, Third Part, (8) On Apostates, p. 178.

[49]Lu Xun, "The Take–Over Policy," in *Lu Xun Selected Works,* Yang Xianyi & Gladys Yang (trans.) (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980), Vol. 4, p. 51.

[50]Lu Xun, "From Deafness to Dumbness", in Yang Hsien–yi & Gladys Yang (trans.) *Lu Xun Selected Works*, vol. 3, p. 349.

[51]Ibid.

self-strengthening in order to save the nation. During the "May Fourth" period, he adopted Nietzsche's doctrine of "reassess all values" as a type of weapon to thoroughly oppose imperialism and feudalism, and adopted the spirit of Nietzsche's "Superman" to encourage the citizenry to reform the old moribund order, to ignore mockery, abuse and ill-intentioned sycophancy, and not to fear loneliness. At the beginning of the 1930s, Lu Xun criticized Nietzsche's abscission from reality and the people, but continued to confirm a certain number of Nietzsche's penetrating and profound observations regarding the social realities of capitalism. Lu Xun long since pointed out the fact that Nietzsche's doctrines themselves were replete with contradictions,[52] and adopted and adapted a number of useful sections of Nietzsche's doctrines to enrich and elucidate his own points of view. From the pattern of the historical environment at the time as well as Lu Xun's own ideological development itself, it ought to be said that Nietzsche's principal influence on Lu Xun's thought was a positive one.

14.3 III

Mao Dun and Guo Moruo discovered Nietzsche a little later than Lu Xun.

In 1917, when Mao Dun, in his first article, "Students and Society," used Nietzsche's ideology as a weapon and opposed the old morality and advocated a new morality, he was only 21 years old. He had studied Nietzsche's works relatively systematically and also consulted a considerable number of works which evaluated Nietzsche. His view of Nietzsche was relatively balanced and his critical attitude was even clearer. His lengthy treatise, *The Doctrines of Nietzsche*, can be said to represent the acme of China's research on Nietzsche. The text is divided into a total of seven sections, including an *Introduction*, *Nietzsche—a Biography and his Works*, *Nietzsche's Writings on Morality*, *Nietzsche the Evolutionary*, *Nietzsche the Sociologist* and a *Conclusion*. Mao Dun's approach to Nietzsche is first and foremost a critical approach. In his *Introduction*, he points out that Nietzsche's doctrines are often self-contradictory and that he "seldom has the opportunity to mix with the citizenry… he knows nothing of the capacity and conditions of ordinary citizens; he is merely a lonely man in a room using his imagination," to which he adds, "He is a great man of letters and his words are extremely moving," therefore "when we read Nietzsche's works we need to be vigilant and constantly employ a critical eye when we look at him and not be swayed by his sharp and shocking words." Regarding his doctrines, "we should only choose the few which are appropriate and use them and discard those that are not useful, in fact we would probably be better to put them out of our minds altogether." Thus, "it is a given that there will be shortcomings in our forebears' doctrines. It does not mean that they are not honorable. And if later generations are not able to identify those shortcomings

[52]"Chalatusitela de xuyan—houji", in *Xin chao*, Vol. 2, Issue 5.

and highlight or even advance their forebears' strong points, then that means that the later generations are dishonorable!" Mao Dun actually adopted this type of spirit in his research into Nietzsche.

Mao Dun believed that "Nietzsche's grandest and finest observation" was to "reassess all philosophical doctrines, all social creeds, all life views and moral stances and reevaluate them… sweeping away all traditional teachings and beliefs… and shaking to its foundations everything that had heretofore been seen as absolute truth." This was obviously in accord with the "May Fourth" consummate antiimperialist, antifeudal spirit of the times. Mao Dun believed that "this point can be borrowed as a sharp weapon with which to destroy the abnormal yoke of the historical traditional old morality, and reassess [all] values and create a type of new morality." His comment on Nietzsche's highlighting of the fundamental opposition between the moral stance of the mighty and the overlord and that of the weak and enslaved, and how he saw "the lion as virtuous and the deer as evil" was: "what a penetrating and powerful observation!" But immediately following this he noted that Nietzsche's "critique of morality is excellent, but his conclusions regarding the trends in morality is flawed." These "moral trends" refers to the elevation of the morality of the mighty as great and the attendant subjugation of the weak. Mao Dun reached a completely opposite conclusion. He argued that since time immemorial, in China "the sovereign exerted pressure from above and forced the citizenry to comply," forcing the citizenry into "blindness and ignorance, complying with the edicts of the sovereign,"[53] resulting in millennia of slavish morality and that the most urgent task currently is to thoroughly destroy this old morality and enable the citizenry to awaken and to create a new morality, to become strong.

Like Lu Xun, Mao Dun accepted Nietzsche's ideal of the Superman in the sense that "man always needs to surpass his forebears." He believed that "from an overall perspective, and without discussing the minutiae, the philosophy of the Superman is fine." Thus "the Superman he speaks of is a progressive individual—and if we were to compare the Superman with contemporary man, it would be like comparing modern man with an ape… Darwin once said, 'man has evolved from an animal' and now Nietzsche is saying that the man of the future must evolve from modern man." Beginning from this purchase point, what Mao Dun borrowed from Nietzsche's philosophy of the Superman was firstly how it swept away all manner of social decay and lethargy, and actively built a new type of man, who stood tall and possessed acute foresight, was brave and adept at battle. Mao Dun stressed the "psychotic nature" of Nietzsche's time; "ordinary people know only to seek ease and comfort, to drink and to dream and humanity will gradually become [nothing more than a herd of] extremely tame domesticated animals." It pained him to know that most people at the time "just live (on) for the sake of remaining alive," how they scamper about and scurry to hide, unable to rise up and resist the "exacting government and harsh punishments." He deeply sensed the fact that "the dejected mood of the populace had reached its apogee," and he looked forward to the day

[53]"Xuesheng yu shehui," carried in *Xuesheng zazhi*, Vol. 4, Issue 12.

when Nietzsche's Superman doctrine might help to transform the devastated national character. Mao Dun pointed out that the "war" that Nietzsche lauded so much, "was not a war whereby nation A invades nation B. It is not a militaristic war. He is referring to the war between the brave and upright cohort and the dark and shadowy forces." Thus he praised Nietzsche's view that one "should not bend the knee when faced with one's environment, but rather transform one's material architecture and adapt to the environment in order to ensure survival." He believed as Nietzsche states: "The conditions that surround mankind at the moment are all wrong. If we speak only of 'survival of the fittest', then in a society of parasites, the fattest, the most slick and evasive, the most delicate are the fittest and the most capable of survival. And if human life were to rely on this example, there would be unseemly struggle." If mankind wishes to advance, then we must "become Supermen," "there is only one method and that is to take these conditions en masse and change them." This is in complete accord with the May Fourth period spirit of thoroughly overturning the old society and establishing a new one. However, as far as Nietzsche's so-called "the common and dumb are many, but the worthy and wise are few, and if you want equality, then that will be a backward step" and "the worthy and wise class should be on top as the rulers and the common and dumb as the ruled" view of society, Mao Xun maintained a consistently clear critical attitude. He noted: "Mankind has always sought progress, but progress is not necessarily derived from competition and the strong swallowing the weak." He argued: "For the strong to become Supermen, they must sacrifice the weak. This is definitely a major wrong." Therefore, Mao Dun reaches the following conclusion regarding Nietzsche's doctrine of the Superman: "If we carefully debate his program, then we can see that Nietzsche worships the power of the strong, which is ruthlessly inhumane." Any intelligent citizen of a weak nation would never accede to a social Darwinist point of view.

Mao Dun's understanding of Nietzsche's will to power doctrine was also quite different. He believed that Nietzsche's statement that "man's strongest will is to have power and not [merely] to survive" did "indeed make some sense," because "only mankind has this 'will for power,' therefore they are not willing to [just] exist as slaves but must struggle on without fear of the powerful. The demand for liberation and self-determination all stems from this. If they were only interested in survival, then the life of pigs and dogs is also one of survival." If we say that the fascist scholars of the 1930s summarized Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power as: "I want to become the ruler of other ethnic groups," and stress the fact that the powerful should treat the lower orders "just like we would treat a mosquito or other insect—kill it, without any conscience or compassion whatsoever,"[54] then at the beginning of the 1920s, Mao Dun's understanding of the doctrine of the will to power was completely opposite. He understood and employed the concept of the will to power as the will of oppressed people and citizens in their opposition to power and their quest for liberation and self-determination. At the same time, he

[54]Spetman, *Nicai de zhuzaiguan*.

criticized such Nietzschean thinking as "it is impossible not to take the vast majority of ordinary citizens as the foundation" in order to place that topmost stone on the apex of the pyramid. "There is nothing more depressing for man's destiny than not to be able to offer [all] worldly power to the head man," and pointed out that "of course, the calls for modern democracy have no place for this type of language."

During the "May Fourth" period, the youthful Mao Dun consistently stressed "do not idolize the ancients," and do not take the words of the ancients "as gospel; you must be able to question and criticize them," and only on this basis should we create new things. His *The Doctrines of Nietzsche* is a perfect example of the realization of this maxim. Thanks to such a clear-cut critical attitude, Nietzsche's influence on Mao Dun was also positive and useful.

Guo Moruo was also quite versed in Nietzsche and relatively appreciative of him.

As early as 1919, in his famous work, *In Praise of Bandits*, Guo Moruo called Nietzsche "bandit of the doctrinal revolution" who "advocates the philosophy of the Superman passionately, and who tricks the gods and smashes the idols," and he offers him three cheers for a long life. In 1923, when he translated *Also Spake Zarathustra*, he planned to summarize Nietzsche's ideology systematically and announced: "My translation of Nietzsche is a kind of personal interpretation of him." He describes this famous work as "a work of blood and erudition" which "merely speaks on behalf of a remarkable, great and outstanding individual," and planned after having completed the translation to summarize his own "experience of trekking through the thoughts of Nietzsche."[55] At the same time, he was also critical of Nietzsche. He pointed out that we "must have a critical eye and that within possible limits we can reject the original work, after which the life of the original work can become your own life with the author's being becoming your own being and you must rely on your own strength and not on that of others."[56]

Apart from attributing the peculiarities of Nietzsche's ideology to "anti-religious thinking," "opposition to the barriers to individual morality," of "taking the individual as the standard and striving for active development," and calling, like Nietzsche, to "advance boldly towards truth whilst holding to individual improvement and resolutely determining to transcend the extra-physical,"[57] he further stressed the development of the innate creative spirit that Nietzsche advocated. On this point, he was in total agreement with Tian Han. Volume 2, Issue 1 of *Creation* quarterly splashed Nietzsche's words in large type across its flyleaf: "Brothers, march towards solitude with all your love and creativity, and justice will limp along after you in a short while." (*Also Spake Zarathustra: the path of the creator*) This gels with the spirit displayed in the Creation Society's early period of

[55]"Yayan yu zili", see *Moruo wenji*, Vol. 10, pp. 73, 74.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Guo Moruo, "Lun Zhong–De wenhuashu", in *Chuangzao zhoubao*, No. 5 or *Moruo wenji*, Vol. 10 for slightly different versions.

resistance to old traditions, contempt for the old fetters, and single-minded pursuit of the creativity of the inner mind. In the first issue of *Creation Weekly*, Guo Moruo, in *Three Types of Deformities*, the first chapter of his translation of Nietzsche's *Also Spake Zarathustra*, spoke of mankind's inability to escape the oppression of the "powers that be." The heavy burden of "you should do this or that" turns a person's spirit into a camel and replaces the "I want …" demands eliminating from the individual's inner being. If we wish to change this circumstance, we must first wrest the power to create new values into our own hands. And if we wish to grasp this power, we must adopt the spirit of a "lion." But a brave and fierce lion does not necessarily equate to creativity. In order to create, the lion must turn into a cub, because "a cub is devoid of suspicion, has no preconceptions, represents a new start, is playful, is a self-turning wheel, poised on the cusp of initial motion, a sacred affirmation. Indeed, brothers all, there needs to be a sacred affirmation of the sport of creation, whereupon the spirit will become master of its will…"[58] The Guo Muoruo of the "May Fourth" period thought very highly of this type of unrestrained, pure innate acuity, this aimless "I want" creativity. This kind of adoration was very common in the literary articles of his time. For example, in *The Traditional Spirit of Chinese Culture*, whilst discussing how to be a man, he notes: "We should not have an aim in mind when we go and do anything. Mankind's spirit is confused by all manner of aims. The world's bitterness is a result of these different 'causes.' We should approach everything with nonchalance. We should be like a baby and move for the sake of movement itself."[59] Here we can clearly see the traces of the form of Nietzsche's "Thou art" and "I want" ideology being expressed in Guo Moruo's thinking. Naturally, in a different time and society, Guo Moruo's innate desires and creative spirit were quite different in terms of content to that of Nietzsche. He was not threatening the "common hordes" with fire and brimstone or vanquishing the world with his soaring and passionate cries, but rather, he was plotting how the oppressed nation and people could self-strengthen and heralding a battle for survival.

In sum, Nietzsche did indeed have an inerasable influence on China's literary world during the "May Fourth" period. Admittedly the reason why he was able to exert this influence was, from the perspective of external factors, the broad popularity of Nietzsche's thought internationally, and especially in Japan. But native reasons were even more important. In other words: First of all, Nietzsche's philosophy of total rejection of all old traditions and his reassessment of all values fitted perfectly with China's historical demand for a thoroughgoing opposition to imperialism and feudalism. Second, as Yu Dafu argued: "The genius of Nietzsche's foresight was his constant clamoring for salvation from the demise of the spirit and the smothering of humanity by material desires and decrying how despicable the civilized veneer of all the Western nations were."[60] This also concurred with the

[58]See Guo Moruo's translation of Neitzsche: *Chalatusitela rushishuo, sanzhong de bianxing*.

[59]Guo Moruo, "Zhongguo wenhuade chuantong jingshen", in *Chuangzao zhoubao*, No. 2.

[60]Yu Dafu, "Jing de wenyi zuopin", in *Xianshu*, p. 137.

antiimperialist sentiments and desire of China's more perceptive individuals for China to avoid the harm of following the capitalist road. Third, putting aside the motivation behind Nietzsche's advocacy of a strong will, of a true and untrammeled creativity and a tenacious and unbending spirit of struggle for the moment, nevertheless, as far as reforming the devastated, hypocritical, compromising, tradition-bound semifeudal, semicolonial social atmosphere was concerned, in terms of the budding response of the "May Fourth" new literature to the historical task of awakening the people's consciousness and reforming the national spirit in order to save the imperiled nation, it was indeed an effective stimulus. Thus Nietzsche's widespread influence in China at this time is by no means coincidental, and the historical significance of this influence was also positive and not the opposite. This point cannot be erased and does not require reiteration. Naturally, as China's revolution progressed, the revolutionary direction and path became clearer by the day and people's enthusiasm for Nietzsche gradually cooled. Guo Moruo put it so well: "In the end, I did not complete the translation of *Zarathustra*. In fact I rejected him. The Chinese revolutionary movement progressively surged and redirected my eyes from looking upward to looking downward and placed a great distance between myself and Nietzsche. Lu Xun had also translated the introduction to this book and failed to translate the whole work. I am afraid that may have been for the same reason."[61] This statement accurately summarizes the true situation at the time.

14.4 IV

At the beginning of the 1940s when Nietzsche's doctrines were revised and expanded by the Fascist theoreticians and formed an important component of the Fascist ideology, China also responded with a short-lived "Nietzsche fever." At the time, a handful of anticommunists supported the Nationalists' right-wing intellectuals to quickly establish a theoretical framework that was advantageous to the rule of the Nationalist party so as to counter Marxism which was spreading widely at the time. The most dangerous and reactionary sections of Nietzsche's doctrines formed the foundation of this attempt.

In 1940, Chen Quan, Lin Tongji, Lei Haizong and others established the *Intrigues of the Warring States* semimonthly, and in 1941 inaugurated the *Warring States* weekly in Chongqing's *Da Gong Bao*. They promoted Nietzsche in various guises, applying his doctrines to such fields as politics, society, morality, and literature and art. Of these, Chen Quan actively applied himself to using Nietzsche's ideology as a guide and attempted to stir up a new literary and artistic tide in the areas controlled by the Nationalist Party.

[61]Guo Moruo, "Yayan yu zili" *fuji* (1958), in *Moruo wenji*, Vol. 10, p. 75.

Chen Quan's tome *From Schopenhauer to Nietzsche* became to known as "China's only book to elucidate the philosophy of the will."[62] This work not only introduced the process of development of Nietzsche's ideology, but it also discussed such topics as *Nietzsche's Political Ideology*, *Nietzsche's Views on Morality*, *Nietzsche's Atheism*, and *[Nietzsche's] Concept of the Feminine*. His second work, *New Trends in Literary Criticism* set out to solve certain questions in the literature and art by using Nietzsche's philosophy and the whole work took the German violent reform movement as its "guide for leading the state" and his philosophy of the will as "the grand future," analyzing such seminal questions as *The Nationalist and Literary Movements*, *Literature of the Golden Age and Literature of the End of Time*, *The Contribution of Chinese Literature to the World*, *Schopenhauer and* A Dream of Red Mansions, or *Nietzsche and* A Dream of Red Mansions. He finally reached the following conclusion: "Mankind has already discovered the self and the world has changed; genius, will, and power are at the heart of all questions… we should not bind ourselves with any 'externally existing' rules whatsoever but rather go forward and open up a new phase of cosmic life according to our own 'innate' motion."[63] This is the new direction that the Warring States School had in mind. Ouyang Fanhai and others believed: "Nietzsche is the true rampart of the Warring States School," and that Chen Quan and his ilk were "attempting to use Nietzsche's ideology to establish the Warring States School's literary and artistic theories."[64] This is a relatively accurate reflection of the reality at the time.

However, due to the differences in eras and social conditions, Nietzsche's influence on China during this period and how people describe the "May Fourth" period as Nietzsche's most important period are quite different matters.

First of all, the critical spirit of the "May Fourth" period is completely absent and Chen Quan and his cohorts are full of hero worship for Nietzsche. They argue that whether or not one reveres Nietzsche himself is itself a watershed between "being a slave or being a master," or "being an ape or being human," "because Nietzsche's works were not fundamentally written for slaves or apes."[65] They praised Nietzsche as a hero, "mighty and mysterious, cannot be imagined or anticipated, no matter when or where, or in what manifestation, we always discover that they [i.e., Nietzsche-type heroes] are different from ordinary people. They seem to have some sort of unfathomable magic power," and "heroes are the crystallization of great power, and without them, perhaps the whole universe would just grind to a halt."[66] If we compare this to what Mao Dun said at the same time, namely "when we read Nietzsche's works we need to be vigilant and constantly employ a critical eye when

[62] *Cong Shubenhua dao Nicai, neirong shuyao*, Dadongshuju, 1946.

[63] Chen Quan, *Wenxue piping de xin fangxiang*, Zhengzhong shuju, 1943, p. 16.

[64] Ouyang Fanhai, "Shenmo shi Zhanguopai de wenyi", carried in *Qunzhong*, 1943, April issue.

[65] Chen Quan, *Wenxue piyu de xin fangxiang*, p. 148.

[66] Chen Quan, "Lun yinxiong chongbai", in *Shidai zhi bo*, Dadong shuju, 1946.

we look at him," and "we must critique Nietzsche's doctrines: where are their strengths and where are their deficiencies?"[67] What a completely different attitude!

As a matter of fact, as we have discussed above, Lu Xun, Mao Dun and others introduced Nietzsche during the "May Fourth" period, and this introduction was closely associated with their philosophy of changing the national character. They hoped that Nietzsche's doctrines would stir the heart of the people, stimulate the venerable yet frail Chinese people's fighting spirit and cause it to awaken and spring to action and thus stand independently in the forest of the world's peoples. In contrast to this, Chen Quan and others introducing Nietzsche in the 1940s had their sights set on consolidating the rule of a tiny minority of so-called "heroes" over the broad masses of people and strove ceaselessly to prove that this type of rule was "reasonable," trumpeting the notion that "the weak" deservedly were doomed and that the masses should accept being ruled. Because this agenda was so different, their understanding and interpretation of Nietzsche was also different. We can take Nietzsche's concept of the Superman as an example. Lu Xun believed the core of the Superman doctrine was: people can and should be outstripped. The man of the future should be more perfect than the present. Men should be in the moment, corporeally and spiritually united in order to reach the pinnacle of their life potential. They should ignore the interference of evil forces and proudly advance. Man's life is long and tedious; do not wish for a brief and glorious life.[68] This is in keeping with the four aspects of the Superman doctrine that Nietzsche presents in the third section of his preface to *Also Spake Zarathustra*, where he typically cries: "Hey! I call you Supermen." In this essay, Nietzsche says: "Hey! I call you Supermen. Man is an object and should be transcended"; "Hey! I call you Supermen. Supermen are the salt of the Earth"; "Hey! I term you Supermen. This is a sea and he can accommodate your huge contempt"; "Hey! I term you Supermen. This is lightning, this is craziness." It should be said that Lu Xun's comprehension is more in accord with Nietzsche's original intent. Meanwhile, Chen Quan in the 1940s offered a different explanation for the doctrine of the Superman, also clearly indicating four points: Firstly: "The Superman is an ideal individual, he is a genius … without genius, all the activities of humankind will sink into stagnation"; Secondly: "The Superman is the leader of mankind … the apes are a laughing stock in the eyes of man and ordinary people are a laughing stock in the eyes of the Superman. Mankind cannot allow a monkey to be their leader, and similarly Supermen will not allow ordinary people to be their leaders … if we were to allow the general public to attend to all affairs, it would be as if we had reverted to the level of beasts"; Thirdly: Supermen are the reformers in society … the value of all objects in society, normal everyday people certainly lack the wisdom and courage required to tear down and resist and only a person of foresight is capable of discovering their faults, and undertaking reform. And without them, society would be lifeless and there would be no more 'human life', there would only be 'death';

[67]Shen Yanbing, *Nicai de xueshuo*.

[68]See "Chalatusitela de xuyan, houji," in *Xinchao*, Vol. 2, Issue 5.

Fourthly: "The Superman is a brave soldier … war is cruel, but that is also the advantage of war; it is because of this cruelty that the elimination of the weak delivers survival to the strong."[69] Obviously, if we say that Lu Xun understood the "Superman" as the future ideal, namely "the exceptional are noble, the exceptional most nearly approximate human perfection," and understood it as the new stage in human evolution that everyone should energetically aspire to, then Chen Quan understands the "Superman" as already existing, as seated high above the masses, naturally ruling everything, a genius that is set against the masses, the leader, a hero. If we say that in introducing Nietzsche, Lu Xun fixed his gaze on "the grand awakening of the group," hoping to continually stir the citizens of the weak nation to self-strengthening, then what Chen Quan spruiked was the rightful elimination of the weak: "The strong should dominate the weak, and the sagely should dominate the dumb. We should not harbor any sympathy whatsoever for the weak and dumb, because they, fundamentally, should not survive on this earth. The space that they occupy should be given over to more superior individuals in their stead… If we establish a system and enable the full development of the weak and dumb, then the world's culture will certainly stagnate and petrify beyond remedy."[70] Of course, since Nietzsche's Superman doctrine is itself flawed, then its means of expression is also extremely obscure and complicated. As Lu Xun noted: "It is constructed of exhortations and from the outside, many contradictions can be seen,"[71] hence, historically, there have been many different interpretations of the Superman doctrine. Nevertheless, we can clearly see that Chen Quan's interpretation is in agreement with that of some other Nazi scholars, in works like *Nietzsche's ideas of rule*, *Nietzsche—Visionary of the Age, Nietzsche and German Development*. They are in accord with their advocacy of a single "ruling class should rule everything," of animosity toward the common people, eulogizing of war, and butchering the weak citizenry. Chen Quan's ideal Superman is fundamentally different to that envisaged by Lu Xun. The "already extreme fallacious argument" that "sagely persons can consummately develop into Supermen, but the dumb should be vigorously aborted so as to avoid tarnishing the dignity of society" which Mao Dun so vehemently criticized was the highest ideal that Chen Quan and his ilk promoted.

Third: During the "May Fourth" period, Nietzsche had a positive influence on the formation of China's new literature through his rebellion against old traditions and his pursuit of a strong will and a creative spirit. But by the 1940s, Chen Quan and his cohorts were plotting to use Nietzsche's ideology as a foundation and, in the decadent Nationalist Party controlled areas, whip up a so-called "glorious" and "mighty new literature movement" centered around genius, will, and power, and pit itself against the post-"May Fourth" progressive literary tradition. According to Chen Quan, the philosophical foundation of the literary theory that they advocated was a "personal philosophy" of "the subjective determining the external" and that

[69]Chen Quan, *Wenxue piping de xin fangxiang*, pp. 145–147.

[70]Chen Quan, *Cong Shubenhua dao Nicai*, pp. 117, 124.

[71]Lu Xun, "Chalatusitela de xuyan, houji".

the completion of Nietzsche's philosophy of the Superman precisely enables this "personal philosophy" ideological tide to "reach its zenith."[72] If we begin from this basis, then "the new trend in contemporary literary criticism is a type of liberation of genius," "genius can create rules at will and rules cannot constrain them." "We should not bind ourselves with any 'externally existing' rules whatsoever but rather go forward and open up a new phase of cosmic life according to our 'innate' motion."[73] This "innate motion" is sometimes referred to as "creation of acuity" and at others, "inner vitality." "Genius" is in fact the manifestation of this power, and thus "the greatest literature in the world is a literature that is capable of elevating and boosting this vitality." According to their interpretation, this type of literature includes three creative motifs, namely: terror, ecstasy, and reverence. First of all, "with regards inexhaustible space-time, life glimpsed its final weakness, glimpsed that final inescapable fate—death, expiration, and destruction, and fear is life's darkest and most dangerous abyss: it can rattle the six extremities and compel the soul to tremble." This is the theme of life's terror. Terror, after which one may thirst, seek, create and subdue: "having subdued the universe… nothing external to yourself will ever live or die… you are a hot and steaming, a chaotic creativity… Ecstasy! Ecstasy! It is a free and random creation derived through struggle from time-space's terror." This is the theme of the ecstasy of life. Having experienced terror and ecstasy, then you will experience a "solemn, expectant adoration," a mysterious, unknowable, "great, lofty, sacred, virtuous, omnipotent" "absolute form" which surpasses "the self" and "time-space." This then is the theme of the reverence of life.[74] This drew literature into an antirationalist enigmatic realm. They believed that Nietzsche's works were the paragon of this type of literature. "Nietzsche is the symbol of the explosion of vitality," "Nietzsche's works are saturated with life… simply a physiological necessity brought about by a type of majestic vitality, created for the sake of creation, created for the sake of the dance of vitality… having no original aim… only vitality's obligatory fleeting dance and extravagance."[75] Thus, literature has become a thing which is divorced from society, divorced from the people, meaningless, aimless, and something to be enjoyed by a small minority, as they claimed: "Literature can only be created by genius," and "there are no footprints of the common man in the field of literature."[76] However, at the same time they advocate: "Today, Chinese literature should use literary and artistic forms to promote its inherent morality,"[77] as well as "Nietzsche's call for a Superman refers to none other than Confucius, Mencius, the Buddha and Jesus."[78] Obviously, on the one hand, the Warring States School

[72]Chen Quan, *Wenxue piping de xin fangxiang*, pp. 14–16.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Lin Tongji, "Jiyu Zhongguo yishuren", see *Shidai zhi bo*, Dadong shuju, 1946, pp. 3, 5, 10.

[75]Lin Tongji, *Cong Shubenhua dao Nicai xu*.

[76]Chen Quan, *Wenxue piping de xin fangxiang*, pp. 50–55.

[77]Chen Quan, "Minzu wenxue yundong de yiyi", see *Zhanguo*, Issue 25.

[78]Lin Tongji, *Cong Shubenhua dao Nicai xu*.

connived to separate literature from politics and life, while on the other they strove to use literary works as a tool to disseminate the old traditions and morality, the aim of which was to consolidate and recreate the existing social order. This was completely counter to the revolutionary "May Fourth" period spirit of opposition to the old culture and old morality and the advocacy of new literature to reform society and people's lives.

Fourth: as described above, although Nietzsche's doctrines belong to the idealist and extreme individualist philosophical streams, nevertheless, during the "May Fourth" period, they flowed into China's antiimperialist, antifeudal historical flood with a combative attitude. The figures at the time who introduced Nietzsche, like Lu Xun, Guo Moruo, Mao Dun and others, never mentioned Nietzsche's direct anti-socialist statements. This was a result of the conditions of the era. By the 1940s, people like Chen Quan who introduced Nietzsche did so by deliberately using Nietzsche's doctrines as a tool to oppose the mass movements of the time. This kind of clear reality and explicitness can be seen throughout their works. For example, when they stressed that "rules" were "a product of genius and acuity," they deemed those who insisted on objective rules to be "midgets," "pedants," or "political clowns."[79] And when they claim that only a genius is capable of being a leader, or of conducting affairs, they slander those who organize the masses to conduct struggle as "devoid of any capacity for independence," "self-appointed progressives who, on hearing others mouth a few slogans, become immensely smug, stretch their necks out and rant";[80] when they blab about how the weak ought deservedly to be eliminated, they rave: "The weak peoples of the world today ceaselessly clamor about justice and humanity, but in the end they are unable to save themselves from their inevitable demise"[81]; when they peddle their "the masses are merely instruments of the geniuses" drivel, they slanderously declare: "At present, if we do not allow the geniuses to lead the masses but instead allow the masses to oppress the geniuses, then what hope of a future will humanity have?" Not only was this so, but Chen Quan and others also especially introduced the "seven matters," which included socialism and people power, and which Nietzsche hated so passionately, and reached the following conclusion: "These are the seven poisons of man, and if we do not get rid of these seven poisons, culture will stagnate, degenerate, petrify, collapse, and perish."[82] This is how they pointed their spearheads at the common people who were at that stage conducting a fierce struggle against imperialism and feudalism, and at socialism. In contrast to the "May Fourth" period, Nietzsche's doctrines in their hands had already become a powerful weapon for protecting and consolidating fascism.

[79]Chen Quan, *Wenxue piping de xin Dongxiang*, pp. 16, 121, 97, 178.
[80]Ibid.
[81]Ibid.
[82]Ibid.

14.5 V

From the brief analysis above, we can not only see that Nietzsche did indeed have different influences at different periods of Chinese history, but also what gave rise to these different influences.

Obviously, as the Chinese people rose up and attempted to overturn feudal rule of several millennia, they could not find new and effective weapons from within Chinese society since that society itself had suffered from a long period of feudal domination. They needed to transcend the old boundaries and find a foothold from which they could observe anew and reevaluate matters, and this foothold was not only new to China, but ideally it should be the "most up to date" internationally as well. Nietzsche's doctrines were indeed a type of "most up to date" ideology and caught the eye of a number of progressive Chinese intellectuals. For the progressive Chinese intellectuals who had already identified and were striving to avoid the weaknesses of capitalism, Nietzsche's exposé and critique of the hypocritical and evil nature of capitalist civilization was truly an excellent reference point. His rejection of all old standards of value, and his image as a wrecker, intent on smashing all idols (a type of image that was new to China's traditional society); his ideal, calling for the transcendence of the mediocre and the "old self" and becoming a healthy and robust Superman deeply motivated China's intellectuals who were yearning to thoroughly overthrow the old society and create a new one, so Nietzsche's calls found resonance and sympathy in them. No matter whether it is the loud cries of protest, "It has always ever been so—does this make it right?" of Lu Xun's madman or Guo Moruo's poems on the theme of destroying the old self and constructing a new one, the echo of Nietzsche's voice is ever present. These are the reasons why around the time of "May Four," Nietzsche had an inerasably progressive influence on China's intellectual world. But Nietzsche's doctrines themselves were replete with chaotic and complex contradictions, and contained a considerable number of irrational elements. As he himself admitted, his works were merely one mountain peak followed by another mountain peak. No road leading to the mountain peaks existed. In other words, his works lacked a reasoning sequence or logical proof; any number of obscure and profound metaphors and symbols in his works were capable of being cited and distorted at will, and if we add to this the preexisting antisocialist, anti-people sections, then given the special political situation in China in the 1940s compared with the "May Fourth" period, Nietzsche's doctrines had a completely different effect.

In addition, with the above brief analysis, we can clearly see that it is certainly not by chance or blindly that an externally introduced tide of thought will have an influence. It of necessity is examined and selected according to the social and temporal needs of the time. For example, during the "May Fourth" period, Nietzsche's *Will to Power* was virtually universally known and that some of his antisocialist rhetoric was hardly noted, and if it was referred to in any way then it was always attended by stern criticism (such as Mao Dun's *The Doctrines of Nietzsche*). Apart from these temporal and social caveats, the propagation of any

ideology originating externally must also be subject to the world view, political orientation and interests and predilections of the propagator themselves. No matter whether it is Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Guo Moruo or Lin Tongji and Chen Quan, the Nietzsche that emerges from their pen is no longer the original Nietzsche, but rather a Nietzsche that has had certain new content or coloration added in. The process of the influence created by any externally introduced ideology is always this same process of selection, differentiation, digestion, assimilation, criticism and abandonment. Any human imitation or transplantation can only be artificial and is incapable of producing any genuinely deep-seated effects.

On the question of how to deal with externally originating ideologies, Lu Xun, Mao Dun and Guo Moruo already in the "May Fourth" period set an excellent example of critical succession and that "May Fourth" metaphysical formulation of adopting an attitude toward externally originating phenomena whereby if there is good, then the whole is good, and if there is bad, then the whole is bad, does not accord with historical realities.

Apart from Nietzsche, of the figures that have had an influence on China's modern literature since "May Fourth," there are also Tolstoy, Ibsen, Romain Rolland, Gorky and others. Of these individuals, the influence of Nietzsche has historically been discussed the least. If we are able to adopt an accurate, historical attitude to the influence of Nietzsche, then it will make it even less difficult to make a realistic and correct assessment of their influences.

Part III
The Chinese Perspective

Chapter 15
Using the Wisdom of the East to Resolve Cultural Conflict

15.1 The Resolution of Cultural Conflict

Many contemporary conflicts are a result of cultural conflict. The recent riots in France that have run to many weeks have given pause for thought. It is reported that the main youthful actors in the riots are admittedly the victims of the pressure of unemployment and poverty; however these materialistic considerations also existed in the past without leading directly to riots like those which have occurred on this occasion. Some foreign news sources report that the riots are a result of anger built up over a long period of time, and stem from racial discrimination and social injustice and that this is a cultural problem. At the same time we can observe that overseas Chinese and Chinese business people abroad, no matter in what society they live, rarely resort to violence and this is also culturally determined.

Culture is rooted in man's inner being and if you attempt to subjugate or eliminate a culture, then perhaps you can succeed for a moment, but the result is always that "grievances will be expressed" and new animosity will be created. Chinese culture stresses "Animosity must be resolved harmoniously".

"Harmony" is firstly the recognition of difference. Without difference then there is no "harmony" to speak of. "Animosity must be resolved harmoniously" means that in the process and in the result of this "harmonizing", both sides need to be allowed to exist and not have one side suppressing the other. Take for example the *Book of Shang: the Cannon of Yao*:"The common people are clear; the 10,000 groups must be harmonized". (i.e. what is being "harmonized" is "10,000 groups" and not just "one group") "Harmony" also carries the sense of "must not be excessive and middle ground must be found". Take for example, in *Guangyun* and *Xinshu: the Art of the Dao*, it states that "Harmony is neither too unyielding nor too soft". Both works refer to the appropriate level of harmony. Once that sweet spot is reached, you must stop while you are ahead and not "overdo it", nor should we stop "short of the mark". This is not a matter of "combining two into one", nor is it "papering over the issues", but "grasping the two extremes and using the middle",

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where the "middle" is neither part A nor part B, but rather a new object that includes the special characteristics of both A and B. Hence, the result of "harmony" is not "convergence" nor even "amalgamation", but rather the formation of a new difference through the creation of new qualities and new differences on a new foundation. Naturally, this does not discount the possibility that over the long and slow process of social development, people may gradually develop certain value standards that they share in common, but even if such common standards exist, nevertheless different areas and different ethnic groups will still have their own particular understandings or forms of expression.

"Animosity must be resolved harmoniously" refers to the dissolving of conflict. Chinese people speak of "It is better to remove enmity than to build it" in which *jie* in fact means "to dissolve". "To dissolve" means engagement, dialogue, reaching a common understanding, even "making large things small and making small things disappear or lancing a pimple.

15.2 The Path to Cultural Conflict Resolution Is Cultural Self-awareness

The most essential core of multicultural coexistence is cultural self-awareness. On this point, the renowned sociologist, Professor Fei Xiaotong in the extremely mature musings of his later career repeatedly stressed this point. He notes: "Cultural self-awareness means that those who live within a certain cultural paradigm have 'the wisdom of self-knowledge' of their culture. They understand its history, how it was formed, what its distinguishing characteristics are and the direction of its development. It is completely devoid of any sense of 'cultural nostalgia'. It does not seek to 'return to the past' and at the same time it does not advocate 'wholesale Westernization' or 'total transformation into the other'. Self-knowledge means adopting an independent stand on cultural choices with regards deciding to adapt to the new environment and the new era in order to strengthen one's autonomous capacity for cultural transformation. Cultural self-awareness is a formidable process. First of all it requires that one recognizes one's own culture, understand the various cultures that one comes into contact with, and only then one is equipped to confirm one's own position in this rapidly developing pluralistic world, and by means of autonomous adaptation, and in conjunction with other cultures, to adopt the strengths of other cultures and simultaneously, make up for one's own weaknesses, and together build the conditions for a fundamental order which is collaboratively endorsed and which enables the peaceful coexistence of all different cultures, each giving expression to their strengths, and marching forward hand in hand"[1].

Since the dawn of the twenty-first century, one of the features of Western culture that most deserves noting is the "cultural self-awareness" which is deepening by the

[1]Fei Xiaotong, *Lun wenhua yu wenhua zijue* (Beijing: Qunyan chubanshe, 2005), p. 526.

day. Back at the time of the First World War, Oswald Spengler wrote his *Decline of the West* where he reflected on the question of Western culture. Now when the late capitalist culture is experiencing an even more profound crisis, the consciousness of this crisis is becoming deeper and deeper. As the renowned French philosopher Edgar Morin said in 2003, bourgeois individualism contains within it the isolation and loneliness of self-centeredness; its blind economic development brought moral and psychological lethargy and created a disconnectedness in all domains, restricting people's capacity for wisdom and leading people to be hamstrung when faced with complex issues, unable to recognize basic or overall problems. Science and technology has prompted social progress but at the same time, it has brought environmental and cultural destruction, creating a new inequality, etc., and replaced the old style slavery with a new style. Urban pollution and scientific ignorance have especially brought a sense of anxiety and endangerment to people, leading them towards nuclear annihilation and ecological death.[2] The American scholar, Richard Rorty, published an article entitled "Humiliation or Solidarity?" in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in which he stated: "Such an upsurge of [European] idealistic self-redefinition would be responded to around the world, in the US and China as well as in Brazil and Russia… Both Europe and America contain many millions of people who see clearly that, despite all that America has done for the cause of human freedom, its assertion of a right to permanent hegemony is a terrible mistake"[3]. The Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, in his *Modernity and the Holocaust*stressed: "Even more strongly the fact that in the West, high culture and extreme barbarity are in fact interlinked and very difficult to differentiate… Modernity is the result of modern civilization, and when highly developed modern civilization goes beyond the range that man is capable of regulating, then this leads to extreme barbarity". This is as different as night is to day when compared to the ideal of the pursuit of liberty, equality, fraternity and the liberation of human nature of the early capitalist period. This all stems from a type of profound cultural self-awareness.

The West's cultural self-awareness is expressed in reflection on the deep-rooted West-centrism. The Italian comparative literature scholar, Sapienza-Università di Roma's Professor Armando Gnisci, termed the process of transcending West-centrism a type of "*askesis*" [strict self-discipline]. In his *Comparative Literature as a Discipline of Decolonialization* he states "If we say that to those countries which have cast off Western colonialism, comparative literature represents a kind of comprehension, research and realization of post-colonialism; then as far as we European scholars are concerned, it actually represents a type of reflective, a type of self-critical and learning format, or we might say it is a means of extricating ourselves from our own colonialist mindset… It relates to a type of self-criticism and an education and reform of the self and [one's relationship/view of] others. This

[2]Edgar Morin, "Au–delà de la globalisation et du développement, société–monde ou empire–monde?", Revue du MAUSS 2/2002 (No 20), p. 43–53 URL: www.cairn.info/revue–du–mauss–2002–2–page–43.htm.

[3]Richard Rorty, "Humiliation or Solidarity?" in Daniel Levy et. al (eds) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations After the Iraq War*. pp. 39–40.

is a type of '*askesis*.'"[4] So it can be seen that progressive Western intellectuals are already aware of the necessity and the difficulty in this post-colonial period of abandoning the West-centric position.

Western cultural self-awareness propels Westerners to explore and research non-Western cultures more deeply, and this has especially led to an upsurge in the rediscovery of the East. This trend is related to the transition from a binary oppositional style of thinking to an interactive cognitive style. In the past, what "cognition" described was a reliable subject "getting acquainted with" a certain opposing object and thereby defining the object, delineating it, and classifying it into a previously known epistemological framework. An interactive cognitive style is opposite to the principle of agency in that it stresses "the principle of the other"; in contrast to a defined "generally applicable principle", to stress a non-determined "principle of interaction" or in other words to stress the fact that both the agent and the other are changed to some degree in the process of cognition, and that a deeper understanding of both a subject and an object must rely on observation and reflection from the point of view of the "other"; the meaning of no object is immutable, but rather changes with changes as the agent occupies different spaces.

In these circumstances, Chinese culture will undoubtedly form an extremely significant "other". As the French scholar François Jullien argues: "The Chinese language lies outside the huge Indo-European language system and what this type of language opens up is a different type of written possibility; Chinese civilization has developed independently of any practical borrowing or relationship influences with Europe and is the culture with the longest history… China faces our ideology squarely from the outside—and therefore is unaffected by traditional preconceptions—an ideal situation". He wrote a special treatise entitled *Why We Westerners Cannot Avoid China When Studying Philosophy*,[5] in which he pointed out: "We choose to embark, in other words we choose to leave in order to create a space for extended contemplation. People have navigated China in order to read Greece better: no matter that there is a seismic cognitive shift, still, thanks to our heritage, we have a certain inherent familiarity with Greek thought and so, in order to understand it and also to discover it, we must sever this familiarity and configure an external vantage point". Only if we begin from a "long-range strategic space", from "the external point of view of the other", will we be capable of configuring a new recognition of ourselves. Most recently he has further explored this question in his book on Mencius and the Enlightenment philosophers.[6] In his foreword, he states:

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[4]Armando Gnisci, *Zuowei feizhiminhua xueke de bijiao* wenxue, translated by Luo Tian in *Zhongguo bijiaowenxue* tonxun, 1996, Issue 1, p. 5. For original see: Armando Gnisci, *La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation* see *Celebrating Comparativism*. Eds. Katalin Kürtösi and Jozsef Pal. Szeged: Attila Jozsef U/Gold Press, 1994, pp. 69–75 or Chap. 2 of Armando Gnisci: *We the Europeans: Italian Essays on Postcolonialism*. The Davies Group. 2014.

[5]"Wei shenmo women Xifangren yanjiu zhexue bu neng raoguo Zhongguo?" in *Kua wenhua duihua*, Issue 5.

[6]"Daode dianji: Mengzi yu qimeng zhexueren de duihua", *Beida xueshu jiangyan congshu* No. 15 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002).

"I chose to begin from such a distant point of view, not because of the prompting of some exotic flavor, or just for the vicarious pleasure of comparison, but simply out of a quest to reclaim a little indirect theoretical leeway, employ a new starting point, and liberate myself from the theoretical disputes that my own habitation of that space renders me incapable of differentiating objectively".

Changes in cultural self-awareness and cognitive methodology have brought the potential for an increased intimacy and mutual understanding between Western and non-Western cultures. For example, Jeremy Rifkin's recently published work, *The European Dream* (2004), argues that the "European Dream" has already quietly eclipsed the American dream. His so-called "American Dream" refers to the opportunity that all individuals have to pursue wealth without any restrictions, and doing so with relatively little attention to the welfare of the broader population; the "European Dream", on the other hand, stresses quality of life, sustainability, stability and harmony. To Rifkin's mind, the "European Dream" is a type of new historical view and according to this view, in a sustainable civilization that is based on quality of life and not on unrestricted individual wealth accretion, what is important is not individual material accumulation, but rather self-cultivation; not on amassing wealth, but on spiritual elevation; not on territorial expansion but on broadening human empathy. As the two mainstays of the "European Dream", multiculturalism and global ecological consciousness recognize that the experience and aspirations of all people are of equal value, and strive to liberate human nature from the bondage of materialism and to emphasize the fact that the earth itself is the most deserving of care. These new realities being proposed by an American scholar in response to a European vision is much closer to the Eastern cultural stance.

In conclusion, the changes outlined above all benefit the linking up of Eastern and Western cultures and facilitating a neutralization of cultural conflict. If we can genuinely achieve thorough cultural self-awareness, and accomplish the "Each to his own sense of beauty, the beauty of mankind, and the common acceptance of different standards of beauty, then the world will be as one" that Mr. Fei Xiaotong speaks of, then cultural conflict can obviously be neutralized.

15.3 The Potential Contribution of China's Traditional Culture in Neutralizing Cultural Conflict

China has already experienced more than a century of reflection and criticism of traditional culture. However, in the past, this has been tempered by a psychology of either "national chauvinism" or ethnic self-abasement, especially the inability to interpret anew China's culture in the new international context. Above we described how the development of the culture of Western ideology had a tremendous stimulating influence on Chinese cultural research and inspired a new fever for the rediscovery of Chinese culture, and especially for a close examination of what kind of contribution China's extremely rich cultural resources might make in the context

of the current cultural conflict. At the same time, in the context of this dialogue with the "other", we must undertake a re-acquaintance with ourselves and especially an acquaintance with our own shortcomings. This naturally is a slow and lengthy process; however we have already experienced an excellent beginning. I believe that the points below are some extremely important aspects that are both intrinsic to Chinese culture and are also able to be used as a reference in the current international cultural reconfiguration.

15.3.1 Indeterminacy and a World View "Generated in the Midst of Chaos"

China's Daoist philosophy stresses that the meaning of all things is not immutable, nor is it necessarily pre-determined. Solutions and meaning are formed amid ever-changing interactive relationships and limitless undefined possibilities. Given a certain opportunity, one of a number of possibilities will become real. This is what Laozi referred to as: "Something formless yet complete" (the *Jingmen Guodian* bamboo texts render it "A state [which is] confusedly formed"). All things are generated from the midst of this formless and faceless "primal chaos", which is the meaning of "existence is created from nothing". And the end result of "existence" is "to return to nothing". "Nothing" is "a non-state state, the likeness of nothingness" and this "nothingness" and "non-state" is in fact not really nothingness or non-statedness because "as a thing the Way is shadowy and indistinct. Indistinct and shadowy, yet within it there is form; Shadowy and indistinct, yet within it there is substance". This "form" and "substance" both exist within "nothingness". But they are still not "actually existing"; they are only a certain type of formless, faceless, as yet unformed potential that is brewing. They do not yet exist, yet they do; they are a type of "non-existent entity". This is the logic of the statement: "All things in the universe are born of existence and existence is born of nothing".

Beginning with China's world view, what is most important is not to get stuck on the notion that what people believe is "already fixed" when in fact what is "determined" is in a continual process of change, but rather to investigate all manner of in the moment and immediate possibilities that are capable of solving problems and which emerge from present reality. As the agent's perspective and frame of reference changes, the objective world presents a different appearance. The agent's own new awareness relies on a new recognition and interaction with the "other" in order to be effective. Since the 1970 s, China has overturned the deadlocked "regulatory" and "universally applicable" dead hand of the "two whatevers" policy[7] and of holding firm to the maxim "Practice is the sole standard for examining truth," which was in fact a correction of the excessive stress on the Western

[7]The "two whatevers" policy was initiated via an editorial in *People's Daily* of 7th February 1977 when Hua Guofeng was Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC.

mode of thought of immutable regulation and universal application, and has instead mobilized China's traditional wisdom of stressing man's subjective initiative. As Zhu Xi states: "Heaven is Man and Man is Heaven. The birth of Man was of Heaven. Heaven gave birth to Man and Heaven is within Man". "Heaven" must be manifest through "man". Only through creatively free "persons" who are adequately and pragmatically autonomous and who are in touch with "Heaven" can the vital ambience of "Heaven" be manifest.

Since the meaning of all things is not immutable, nor is it necessarily pre-determined, but rather it is formed amid ever-changing interactive relationships and limitless undefined possibilities, then, generations of angst which are based on unchanging premises and viewpoints are not necessarily based on unchallengeable rationality or legality. Thus, China's "harmony is precious" philosophy opposes "ceaseless enmity" and advocates "the necessary resolution of animosity" and "dismissing vengeance with a single smile". From Lu Xun's short story *Forging the Sword* we can see the irony of the "generations of angst", and in some of Jin Yong's novels we can also see the dual ensemble of revenge and reconciliation.

Above we discussed the fact that the "shadowy and indistinct" and "existence within non-existence" world views as they are expressed in the *Dao De Jing* and the current scientific thinking on primal chaos have a considerable number of points of congruence. The authors of the work *Seven Life Lessons of Chaos: Spiritual Wisdom from the Science of Change*[8] noted: "*The Book of Changes* was especially inspirational to us. Chaos theory originated in the study of the relationship of man and such complex physical systems as meteorology, electrical circuits, turbulence and more. It is obvious that the authors and commentators of *The Book of Changes* reflected over a long period of time on the relationship between order and disorder in the activities of mankind and finally termed this relationship the 'Supreme Ultimate'". They also go on to say: "The societies of Europe, America and China are in the midst of an era of great change, and just like the authors and annotators of the *Book of Changes* in the past, at this very moment people are engaged in attempting to clarify the relationship between the individual and the collective, seeking stability in unceasing change. Our era is one with huge capacities which have been forged from a vast array of thought and perception. Social conditions in the world today resemble the physical state of disequilibrium. New eras of relative stability and unanticipated architectures may at times be suddenly created. Perhaps when in the future society develops in a direction that we had not even hoped it would, Chaos science will be able to assist us in understanding how everything happened". If this attitude is maintained, then an ideological basis can be found to resolve cultural conflict.

[8]Chen Zhong et al. (trans.), *Hundun qijian—laizi yixue de yongheng zhihui*, (Shanghai: Shanghai keji jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003). The original work is John Briggs and F. David Peat, *Seven Life Lessons of Chaos: Spiritual Wisdom from the Science of Change* (New York: Harper Perennia, 2000).

15.3.2 Multiple Modes of Thought that Differ from the West

15.3.2.1 Grasp the Two Ends and Implement the Middle Course; One Divides into Three

Western culture has for a long time been accustomed to "the dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity" mode of thinking. As Bertrand Russell notes, Descartes' system pointed out that the spiritual and material worlds are two parallel and mutually independent worlds and that you can study one of them without reference to the other. They pay particular attention to the agent's dissection and classification of one aspect and subsequent recognition of an object. People always believe the "laws" which they deduce by means of abstraction from an object, and they promote them as universally applicable and valid generalities, and the abstractions that they hold in esteem go far beyond the peculiarities and realities of the object that they are observing. If we begin from this point, then currently existing centralized power structures can only administer the world by means of a generalized, homogenized, mutually exclusive classification methodology. This is detrimental to the complexity of the broad-ranging relationships between objects and also damages genuine creative free development. If immutable regularization and generalization is taken to the extreme, then this forms the ideological basis for cultural hegemony.

China's cognitive process is in fact completely different to this. Firstly there is the principle of "one divides into three", and the Middle Way that derives from this. Right at the outset, China's traditional culture advocated the principle of "one divides into three". One of the pillars of Chinese culture is the Eight Trigrams. Each trigram is made up of three strokes, and any extrapolation from three is infinite. Thus it is said that "the original breath of the Supreme Ultimate comprises three in one.[9]. The *Book of History: the Book of Law* points out: "Numbers start from one, end with ten, and are complete at three" .Why should they "be complete at three"? When two different things that originally had no relationship to one another meet and form a "sector", they create a new third object which is different to the original two. This is what Laozi speaks of: "The *Dao* produces one, the one produces two, the two produce three, and the three produce the myriad of objects". The *Book of Changes: Commentary on the Appended Phrases* clearly states: "The *Book of Changes* is a book that covers a wide range of knowledge, including the Dao of Heaven, the Dao of the Earth, and the Dao of humans". The sky and the earth alone are insufficient. There must be a third element, "man" to "praise the nurturing power of heaven and earth" before it can be called a world, i.e. sky, earth and man. The true spirit of the *Doctrine of the Mean* is also to discover Middle Way between the "excessive" and the "inadequate", or the so-called "grasp the two ends and use the middle" (or listen to both sides and choose the middle course). This "center" is not a "compromise or trade-off" between the two former entities, but is rather newly

[9]Liu Xin, "San tong li pu," see *Hanshu—Lǜlizhi shang*, and also consult Prof. Pang Pu's work, "Yi fenwei san".

created "third" way from the sector which has been formed between the original "two extremes". The *Book of Han: Biography of He Wu* states: "He Wu hated cliques. He asked scholars about officials and asked officials about scholars, so that their comments could be compared and tested". This refers to the two extremes of scholars and officials and the formation of a new third opinion which is neither that of an "official" nor a "Confucian scholar". Thus, when people are trying to understand an object, they must first "grasp its two extremes", and then "seek its Middle Way". This is the greatest ideal of the Confucianist idea of the Middle Way. The crystallization of this wisdom may perhaps be able to save the world from its increasing tendency towards violence, fear and extremism.

15.3.2.2 The Interrelationship Between the Five Elements

The five elements ideology is another system within China's epistemology and methodology. It first appeared in the *Book of Shang: Hongfan* and later features frequently in the *Zuo Zhuan* and the *Guo Yu*, amongst others. It means that all of the objects in the world are made up of five types of elements and the relationships which they form. These five elements are wood, fire, earth, metal and water, and these represent the colors blue, red, yellow, white and black, as well as the parts of the human body the liver, the heart, the spleen, the lungs and the kidneys. They also represent the directions East, South, Center, West, and North, the seasons Spring, Summer, late summer, Autumn, Winter and so on. The five elements engender one another (water produces wood, fire produces earth, metal produces water, wood produces fire, earth produces metal), and they overcome one another (water overcomes fire, fire overcomes metal, metal overcomes wood, wood overcomes earth, earth overcomes water), and the cycle repeats itself, perpetually.

If we begin with the broad connections of mutual engendering and mutual subjugation, then we inevitably attach importance to the diversity of things, their differences and their mutual relationships, the result of which is inevitably the celebration of diversity and respect for nature.

15.3.2.3 "Turning Back Is the Motion of the *Dao*"

For many centuries, no matter whether in the West or in the East under the influence of the West, whether in the humanities or social sciences, the influence of the theory of evolution has been extremely pervasive. People surge forward energetically; having extracted all the natural resources, they still want to extract more; having enjoyed life to the full, they still want to enjoy more; as they rush headlong towards the future they still wish to go faster… This has already become the mode of thinking and of living of a considerable number of people. As to what that future is, is the "new" necessarily better than the "old"? And what is this destination that everyone is rushing off to? Apart from the grave, which is the inevitable destination

of all individuals, there is no real definite answer that can be offered! What China's ancient teachings stress is completely different to this. Beginning with Laozi's *Classic of the Dao* which stressed "turning back is the motion of the *Dao*", the emergence of the *Dao* invariably begins with regression. The movement of all things has a type of returning tendency; they all want to return to the starting point of their motion, and on the basis of a new understanding and new experience, set out anew and thereby ascend to an even higher plane. This is what the Warring States bamboo annals termed "restoration" or "feedback", which is the fundamental condition for the development of all things. Chinese philosophy does not privilege linear development based on time, but rather places more emphasis on returning to the beginning. This is what is referred to as "returning to one's roots and beginning anew". Since all things are continually returning to the original and then sallying forth again, and not "rushing" blindly in a certain direction, then there is no need for haste. Chinese culture stresses [the point that we must] "let things take their own course" and develop collaboratively, but at the same time it is opposed to stagnation and no change. The core of the *Book of Changes*, the ancient and remote source of China's culture, is development and change. This is an excellent reference as well as a buffer for "sustainable development", a check on society's current blind rush. In fact, at every historical turning point, people always tend to return to their own cultural source and seek a new pathway. Western cultural development has also regularly looked back on and referenced anew ancient Greece and the Hebrew tradition. Currently, in the West, returning to the origins and sallying forth anew has also become a new trend. If people changed the "rush headlong" and "blindly struggle on and grapple" mindset, and get accustomed to turning one's head and taking a look, then cultural conflict might also be greatly alleviated.

15.3.3 The Relationship Between Man and Society

The West's emphasis on the rights of the individual and free will has already developed to the extreme, but man can only survive if embedded in a relationship with others. Individual rights can only be realized in a context where others are able to ensure that these rights are realized. Therefore for one to demand one's own rights, one must take on the responsibility of guaranteeing the rights of others. Unlike the liberal mode, the Confucian cannon did not see society as a means of achieving the aims of the individual, nor did they, like the collectivists, see the individual as a means to achieving some type of social ideal. The Confucians believed that the "people" as a social grouping are the foundation of all nations under heaven. "People are the foundation of a state; when the foundation is solid, the state can be at peace". Confucius was both an advocate for simple government as well as an active supporter of the establishment of independent human social groupings. He argued: "He who rules by moral force is like the pole star, which remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it". Confucius' ideal

society is a stable government, and a populace free of litigation. These calls of the Confucianists can perhaps correct the abuses of Western democracy and assist in creating a new style of mind–body balanced and fairer democracy, and ameliorate the cultural conflict that erupts from one type of ideology ruling the world and being forced onto others.

Chapter 16
Some Special Features of China's Traditional Literary Criticism

The West's traditional literary criticism is focused heavily on a system based on clear concepts and propositions. It stresses analysis through classification. The style of thinking that they adopt is largely a logic paradigm. According to this paradigm, by means of distillation, people make broader and broader generalizations about content, and argue that the content that results from this type of linguistic summation is an accurate reflection in terms of meaning. As Roland Barthes argued, it (referring to the results of analysis) is "a gradual vanquishment of the thick shadows surrounding the self (referring to the object being analyzed)" (*Le Degré zéro de l'écriture* [1953]). This is a total rejection of any special time–space, any specific perspective, or individuality (i.e., "thick shadows" surrounding the self) which the "self" may inhabit, causing the "self" to become "transparent". For this reason, the space that logic describes is a relatively stable, closed space, and the traditional Western literary criticism has also largely emerged and developed within a definite, closed system.

It was not until the twentieth century that another thought paradigm—the phenomenological paradigm—was able to gradually win for itself an important place in academic research. What the phenomenological paradigm stresses is first not a "system" (structure) which has been abbreviated and summarized, but is a living, existing, moving, "body" that is capable of feeling pain and delight. This "self" is surrounded by the different "thick shadows" of passion, desire, and will which inhabit a specific time-space and cannot be abbreviated and is not transparent; because of its rapid substantial change, it is also difficult to use relatively slowly changing language to accurately and comprehensively express it. Therefore, the space that phenomenology describes is an unstable topological space that changes infinitely with changes in the agent. Under the direction of this type of thinking methodology, literary criticism also developed in an open, indefinite direction that was filled with clamoring voices.

China's traditional method of thinking and this type of phenomenological paradigm are comparatively similar. The ancient Chinese very early noticed that the natural world changed with the changes in time, place, and sentiment that the agent

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was experiencing. As the famous poet Su Shi[1] in his poem *Inscription on the Wall of Xilin Temple* put it: "From the side, it is a mountain range, but from the end, a single peak. Far or near, high or low—no two parts are alike. Why can't I tell the true shape of Lushan? It is because I myself am part of the mountain." In other words, depending on the different vantage points of the agent, the form of the mountain also changes. Chinese philosophers argue that every man lives in his own temporal space, and that each individual inhabiting his/her own distinct temporal space and its surrounding environment forms a type of "scene/sight/circumstance," and this "circumstance" changes with the individual's mood and with any changes in the surrounding context, as well as with the changes in his/her relationship with other individuals and objects. Without the experience of a human agent, no externally existing phenomenon can have meaning. Beginning from this premise, the famous Chinese philosopher Wang Yangming suggested that "nothing exists beyond human consciousness." On one occasion, one of his friends motioned to the herbage in a gully and asked: "The herbage on this mountain grows and withers of its own volition. What has it got to do with my consciousness?" To which Wang Yangming replied: "Before you saw this herbage, both these flowers and your consciousness were silent. When you came and looked at these flowers, then the radiance of these flowers lifted and thus you came to realize that the flowers are not external to your consciousness."[2] In other words, if the agent is absent, then as far as the agent is concerned, everything returns to dust. Wang Yangming went on to point out that if you wish to define an object, then you cannot rely on its own body but rather you must rely on other related objects. For example, if you wish to explain the special characteristics of a tortoise or a rabbit, then you must rely on objects that differ from them. If you say "a tortoise has no hair and a rabbit has no horns," then you are using things like oxen or goats, which have hair, to define a tortoise as having no hair and use something like a deer or an antelope, which both have horns to define a rabbit as not having horns. As far as a language not being able to completely convey meaning (words cannot exhaust meaning) is concerned, we must go beyond language to discover the meaning that has been lost. This is a question that people have been debating for over two millennia, ever since Laozi and Zhuangzi. These philosophical theories form the most fundamental principles of Chinese literary criticism theory.

For example, in China's ancient literary treatises, the mutual interaction and mutual engenderment of "emotion" (the subject) and "prospect" (the object) is one of the most debated core questions. Fan Xiwen of the Southern Song Dynasty was the first to raise the topic of the mutual interaction of emotion and prospect. In *Night Conversations Facing the Bed* he suggested: "There is no emotion that cannot be stirred by prospect, and there is no prospect that will not stir emotion" because

[1]Lived 1037–1101, also known as Su Dongpo, writer, poet, painter, calligrapher, pharmacologist, gastronome, and statesman of the Song Dynasty.

[2]Wang Yangming, "Chuanxi lu—yulu san," in *Wang Yangming quanji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), Vol. 1, pp. 107, 108.

"feelings and scenes cannot be separated." The interaction between "emotion" and "prospect" creates meaning and art, and if "emotion" and "prospect" do not interact, then they, as Wang Yangming states, "all revert to silence." Only when the internally occurring "emotion" and the externally occurring "prospect" interact and engender one another can unique life experiences occur to form unique human existence and unique artistic expression. Therefore is we wish to discuss art and literature, we must begin with the individual life experience of every individual's unique space–time reality, and not from preformed concepts or paradigms. China's literary criticism was truly formed from this type of philosophical foundation.

If we start from the above mode of thinking, China's traditional literary theory, literary criticism and literary appreciation invariably melds into one entity and its form of expression is typically not via a "systematized" grand theoretical treatise, but most often via terse, profound, brilliant fragments imbued with broad applicability and something approaching the quality of a maxim. Initially, these fragments invariably appeared in the musings of philosophers or in preface/postscripts or marginal notes to specific works. An example of the former is Confucius' statement: "Why are none of my disciples engaged in the study of poetry? The study of poetry can develop one's imagination, can improve one's ability to observe, can cultivate one's collective spirit, and can show one the way to satirize." A handful of concise statements, no necessity for any systematic argument; just an extremely "systematic" statement on the social function of literature. Meanwhile, an example of the latter is the *Great Preface to the Book of Songs*: "The poem is that to which what is intently on the mind (志) goes. In the mind (心) it is 'being intent' (志); coming out in language (言), it is a poem. The affections (qing) are stirred within and take on form (形) in words (言). If words alone are inadequate, we speak them out in sighs."[3] Very few words, but a comparatively comprehensive theoretical explanation of the creation of literature and the basis of its development, whilst at the same time outlining the criteria for critiquing a work of literature and the basic foundation for appreciating a literary work.

During the Wei-Jin period (220–420), a number of the literati increasingly felt that if they used the normal language of logic to describe a poem, then they were unable to express their experience completely satisfactorily, so they began to adopt the poetic form to elucidate certain literary questions. One of the pioneers in this endeavor was Lu Ji (261–303). He used exquisite rhyme and the antithetical *fu* style to write "The Poetic Exposition on Literature" in which he declaimed his own personal understanding of literature. By the Tang Dynasty (618–907), the "discuss poetry through poetry" form had developed even further. Of Du Fu's *Six Playful Quatrains*, the first three poems discuss authors and the following three discuss the rules of literary creation, including "I love the poets from the past, but that is not to say that I neglect the contemporaries. I accept all elegant lines as my good neighbors," or "Discard the shoddy poems and follow the style of the *Book of Songs*; your teachers should number more than one," and in others of his poems he

[3]"The 'Great Preface'" in Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, pp. 40–41.

discusses how "Having pored over ten thousand volumes, one can write with godly power," or he appraises Li Bai's poetry saying: "He lifts his pen and the tempest is terrified; when the poem is complete, the ghosts and gods are moved," and more. All of the above he accomplishes in extremely terse language and from the perspective of personal experience, from which he sums up some extremely rich evaluation criteria and theoretical principles. Following this, the number of poets and critics who used the poetic form to discuss poetry numbered more than a score, including Dai Fugu, the master of the theory of exposition in his *Ten Quatrains on Poetry* and Yuan Haowen who wrote *Thirty Poems on Poetry* and who stressed the assessment of an author's work and appraised especially fine phrases. The former's discussions of the meditation and language of a poem, such as "To understand the rules of poetry is like practicing meditation, the true meaning is not conveyed through text [alone]," and the latter's analysis of the relationship between emotion and prospect, such as "When the eyes behold it (a prospect), emotions are stirred and your poetry will naturally become inspired—it is much better than groping in the dark." Both employed the bare minimum of language to express the most profound and the most prolific principles of literature.

At the same time, a new type of literary commentary genre gained popularity in the Song Dynasty. This was generated from Ouyang Xiu's "Remarks on Poetry." The moment this genre appeared, it began to thrive. According to statistics, in the more than 300 years of the Song Dynasty, over 140 different famous remarks on poetry can be identified. Ouyang Xiu says that he wrote his "Remarks on Poetry" "as topics for casual conversation." This proves that "Remarks on Poetry" did not have any grand purpose, but rather were extremely casual, relaxed and animated. Whenever two or three friends would meet, they would perhaps discuss the creative insights of a poet or record anecdotes about the emotions of leisure of the literati, or perhaps appraise or comment on some poem or poetic phrase or crux of a poem. Then again, they may make a penetrating theoretical analysis of a certain excerpt of a literary piece, but generally they would reveal a theoretical point through criticism which springs from direct experience or through aesthetic appreciation. It is a fact that, from the Song right up to the end of the Qing, a considerable number of China's literary theory debates, analyses and developments were all realized through the medium of the "remarks on poetry" and the questions which the "remarks on poetry" touched on and their content was both extremely broad and complex.

For example, Wang Fuzhi's *Remarks on Poetry from the Ginger Studio*, which in a concise three to five hundred character treatise, drew a number of incredibly brilliant conclusions. They included his major theory that different readers may have different readings of the author's mind "The author may have a certain intent, but each reader takes from it what they will, depending on their own emotions," or his "if one uses a happy prospect to describe sorrow, and a sad prospect to describe happiness, then the effect is doubled" analysis which takes the borrowed "Long ago we set out/when willows were rich and green. /Now we come back/through thickly falling snow" as an example, Or alternatively, his discourse on scenes and language, or his impressions and poetic passion gleaned from touring China's famous

mountains and great rivers; or his criticism of a fixed format and style; even his adding the finishing touches to the assessment of the entire sweep of [China's] history of literary development….[4] Naturally, thanks to its oversimplification, the *shihua* form only consists of judgments and finds it difficult to attempt any meaningful or deep demonstration of proof, nor is there any relationship between the famous passages, and they cannot be arranged to form an orderly "paradigm". Nevertheless, speaking broadly, the author's ideology and viewpoints are consistent, and if all of the individual scattered snippets are brought together, then the "pulse of the author's ideology" can be discerned.

Like the "remarks on poetry," China's traditional theory of fiction developed from an initial disparate and unsystematic form consisting of preface/postscript and jottings, until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when commentary on fiction had become the major form of fiction theory and criticism. The so-called fiction commentary generally included the following facets: (1) "Preface": This outlines the value and significance of the relevant piece of fiction and includes a commentary on the origin of the work; (2) "How to read the work": an overarching explanation of the salient features of the work and questions to keep in mind whilst reading it; (3) "General assessment": there is a general assessment at the beginning or end of each chapter, normally it assesses the relevant artistic technique used in the work, including its success or failure, strengths and weaknesses, and occasionally it includes comments on certain social questions reflected in the chapter; (4) "Headnotes": these are inserted at the very beginning of the text; (5) "Margin notes": inserted to the side of the page; (6) "Critical annotations between the lines/Inserted notes": these are inserted between the lines of text. These notes all offer a specific critique and analysis of the characters, events, narration or description included in the text.

The form of the fiction commentary means that the textual commentary and the narrative itself are interwoven and that the reader can read the work whilst at the same time noting the comments (or they can be seen as a certain "reader's" "impression of the work"). This type of "commentary" can often draw the reader's attention to certain points that might be otherwise missed and not appreciated, as well as allowing the reader for a moment to break from the plot of the narrative and stand external to the narrative so as allow them to appreciate and ponder what has occurred in the narrative and thus achieve some sort of "distancing effect" which often resides within the work itself. Commentary on fiction can on the one hand summarize the creative experience of the author and point out its unique features, whilst on the other hand it can lead the reader to appreciate and read the work and to undertake specific analysis of the detail of the work. It can also tease theories and principles from the specific strengths and failings of the work. Commentary on fiction normally begins from the specific portrayal of the artistic imagery and therefore can link tightly the artistic appreciation, character appraisal and theoretical analysis.

[4]Wang Fuzhi, *Jiangzhai shihua*, *Jiangzhai shihua jianzhu* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), pp. 4, 10, 80, 81, 91, 104.

This special "write something on impulse" characteristic of commentary on fiction has rendered the commentary itself a type of free indulgence, a concise, vivacious and quick-witted genre of "a raft of emotions brought together to form an essay." Those making the commentary invariably apply themselves to their task with an easy confidence and with humor, drawing insights from all angles, unfolding freely and naturally. Brilliant pieces of fiction commentary at times include buffoonery and making fun while at others they are solemnly sprinkled with tears of sympathy for the plight of the characters. Still others use the opportunity to pontificate, "borrowing another's wine cup to drown one's own sorrows", or mocking the present through the past and satirizing or ridiculing certain unhealthy social customs. At yet other times they give free rein to their imagination, while at others they hold forth in major treatises. And sometimes they treasure their pens like gold. Because of these peculiarities, fiction commentary has since the middle of the Ming Dynasty when Li Zhuwu blazed the trail with his commentary on *The Water Margin*, virtually all of China's major pieces of fiction, including *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Mao Zonggang's commentary), *Journey to the West* (Chen Shibin and Wang Danyi's commentaries), *Jin Ping Mei* (Zhang Zhupo's commentary), or *A Dream of Red Mansions* (Zhi Yanzhai's commentary) have been subject to commentary. And this tradition of commentary has continued to the present day, with the recent commentary and popularity of the works of the new martial arts school writer Jin Yong constituting but one example.

Remarks on poetry and fiction commentary are the main forms of Chinese literary criticism, but that is not to say that China does not have other forms. On the contrary, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, the first major work to systematically discuss "literary theory", Zhong Rong's *Poetic Criticisms* which "systematically" assesses the works of writers and *Twenty-four Poetic Criticisms* which "systematically" analyzes poetic style, etc., are all relatively complete and systematic theoretical summations of China's literary development. Apart from the fact that this type of "systematic" work is far outstripped numerically by *shi hua*, its form in succeeding generations has yet to attract much more subsequent development. What is more, in terms of its internal arrangement, no matter whether it is *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* or *Poetic Criticisms* and *Twenty-four Poetic Criticisms*, many segments are merely collections of the *shi hua* writing style. In fact, apart for a handful of theoretical chapters, the specialist tome with the strongest theoretical structure, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, can be viewed as a compendium of *shi hua* which has been arranged according to a definite architecture and that those chapters splendidly embody the distinguishing characteristics of Chinese literary criticism. As far as the discussion of literature is concerned, right up until before "May Fourth," besides this "commentary", no other "systematic" theoretical works were produced.

During the development of Chinese literature, the spirit and tradition of *shi hua* and fiction commentary never waned. What is especially worth noting is that during the twentieth century, the combined styles of *shi hua* and fiction commentary shone with extraordinary splendor with the appearance of a string of works including Zhu Guangqian's *On Poetry*, Zong Baihua's *Strolling in Aesthetics*, and Qian

Zhongshu's *Notes on Literature and Art* and *Limited Views: Essays on Ideas and Letter*s, bringing convergence to the immortal masterpieces of both China and the West. These work all employed similar *shi hua* and fiction commentary methodologies to effect literary criticism. Such works as *Notes on Literature and Art* and *Limited Views* surveyed the ancient and modern and scanned the world, and used the conspicuous yet scattered "needlepoints and grains" that they identified to discuss major questions of literature. Qian Zhongshu says that what he is interested in is specific literary criticism and appraisal. If you completely abandon what is contained within a poem and seek for things external to it, then it is like ignoring things nearby whilst hoping to obtain something by reaching up to heaven or down to the netherworld—it can be used in historiography or sermonizing but it should not be used in artistic appreciation. The four volumes of *Limited Views* were mainly written during the ten chaotic years of the Cultural Revolution. The work consists of 781 chapters in total and is focused around ten ancient texts, including *The True Meaning of The Book of Changes*, *The True Meaning of The Book of Songs*, and *The True Meaning of the Zuo Zhuan*. It quotes from more than 1000 works of over 800 foreign scholars and draws together over 3000 authors from both China and abroad. With ten different original classics as its core, it explores, in a "writing something on impulse" manner, the author's own thoughts and feelings, including his insights and discoveries and all manner of mental associations and inferences that he has gained as he read these ancient classics. Qian Zhongshu never intended to use any man-made "system" and impose it on the objective world, nor any "system" constraints. He believed that there was nothing to be gained by expending a great amount of energy in order to set up some huge "system". Historically, "the only thing of value that remains of an entire theoretical paradigm are just a few fragmentary concepts"[5] and nothing more.

To sum up, as has been discussed above, such literary criticism forms as *shi hua* and fiction commentary were not born independently but are rather the result of a lengthy accumulation of the Chinese mode of thinking. This form constitutes an "alternative" form of literary criticism to the comprehensive and lucid "system" that traditional Western literary theory has striven for, and must certainly be worth considering in the context of the future development of world literature.

[5]Qian Zhongshu, "Du La'aokong," in *Qizhui ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), p. 34.

Chapter 17
"Harmony, Homogeneity" and Literary Research

17.1 I

The question I would like to discuss is: in the context of the current major trend toward economic globalization, the standardization of science and technology, and the globalization of media and broadcasting, can the diversity and richness of human culture which has been created over the past several millennia survive and develop? Can the diverse cultural ecology be protected and preserved? Facing this momentous question which confronts all of humanity, what is the significance of the literary research or comparative literary research that we are engaged in? What can it offer? At every twist and turn of history, people usually look back at the origins of their own culture and search for a new path. This is as Laozi describes it: "Turning back is the motion of the *Dao*", the faint stirrings of the *Dao*, and it always begins with reflection, just as Western cultural progress has invariably looked back on and reappraised ancient Greece and the Hebrew tradition.

China's traditional culture has always attached importance to difference. From a very early stage it believed that "difference" was the foundation of the development of objects. At the end of the Western Zhou (around the seventh century BCE), when Bo Yangfu (Shibo) discussed the Western Zhou political situation with Zheng Huangong, he noted that the Western Zhou was doomed because the King of Zhou "abandoned harmony and embraced sameness", or in other words, he dismissed the virtuous who offered frank admonishment and trusted petty folk who agreed blindly with himself. He differentiated between the concepts of "harmony" (*he*) and "sameness" (*tong*) by saying that on the precondition of difference yet interrelatedness, mutually different objects are able to develop if they advance together in harmony, instead of overlaying similar objects with the only possible result being to stifle the vitality.

The Grand Chancellor of the State of Qi, Yan Ying (died 500 BCE) further explained Bo Yangfu's thinking. On one occasion when he was paying a visit to the Marquis of Qi, Yan Ying said: "Liang Qiuju is merely seeking 'sameness.' How is

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it possible, then, to speak of 'harmony'?" At which point the Marquis of Qi asked: "Do you mean there is a difference between 'harmony' and 'sameness'?" This elicited a huge response from Yan Ying. He believed that "difference" was the most basic requirement for objects to be constituted and to develop. For example, when you are cooking, only when the oil, salt, sauce, and vinegar are "different" is it possible to correctly term the result a proper dish. Or with music, there must be "differences" such as "short and long, quickly and slow [notes]" or "sad and happy, firm and supple [notes]" in order to "complement each other and form a whole". Yan Ying noted that for a person like Liang Qiuju—if you say yes, he will also say yes, and if you say no, then he will also say no. What use is this? Subsequently, "harmony in diversity" (*he er bu tong*) became one of the core concepts of China's traditional culture. Thus, Confucius (551–479 BCE) states: "The gentleman seeks harmonious unity but is never a sycophant, while small men are sycophantic but never harmonious." "Difference" (that which the gentleman respects) is offered as a fundamental principle in being human.

But the "difference" that is mentioned here does not mean an absence of any connection at all. There must be "commonality" between all elements of "difference". "Commonality" refers to a mutual relationship of profitable harmony between objects. The Chinese character for "commonality" is an ancient one which can be seen in both the bronze inscriptions and bamboo annals. In classical Chinese, "和" is used as a verb, signifying the harmonization of different individuals and matters and equalizing or harmonizing them (but not amalgamating them into one). As the *Book of Shang: the Cannon of Yao* states: "To achieve a harmony among ten thousand nations" (what is stressed here is "ten thousand nations" and not an amalgamation into "one group." The ancient "*he*" character also carries the meaning of obeying the *Dao*, not going to excess, and finding its middle path.

The principle of "harmony in diversity" (*he er butong*) holds that although differences exist between all objects, nevertheless they can never divorce themselves from mutual relationships and exist independently. The original meaning of "*he*" was to find a way to coexist in the context of a network of considerably different relationships and different elements. In China, the foundation of the Confucian canon is the relationship between individuals, while the Daoist foundation is the relationship between man and nature. Both, in their different domains, address the question of how to attain harmony and mutual accommodation. The primary spirit of *he* is to harmonize the "dissimilar" and achieve a new harmonious unity, enabling all different entities to achieve a new development and to form new and different phenomena. The highest ideal of China's traditional culture was for "All creatures to flourish side by side without harming one another, while the *Dao* moves in unison without creating conflict," where the "all creatures flourish side by side" and "the *Dao* moves in unison" indicates "difference," while "without harming one another" and "without creating conflict" indicates "harmony." The highest ideal of Zhuangzi is "the grand union of the ten thousand objects" and to facilitate the most comprehensive harmony possible to the world. As a core moral concept in human relationships, the Confucians stressed such behavioral standards as "parental benevolence and filial piety," "brotherly love and respect," "princely

righteousness and ministerial devotion," etc., and strove to find an appropriate measure of harmony in the relationship between the two. Thus, we say: "The rites are important but harmony is the most important," where "rites" refers to commonly respected principles and standards which must be predicated on harmony and moderation in order to see genuine realization. Founded on a spirit of uninterrupted blossoming and a continuing quest for a new harmony and progress, this "moderation" has offered multicultural coexistence an inexhaustible ideological wellspring.

17.2 II

Currently, the need to respect difference has been commonly recognized by a considerable number of people. The famous Italian thinker and author, Umberto Eco, in his keynote address to the meeting commemorating the 900th anniversary of the establishment of the University of Bologna in 1999 pointed out, the aim of Europe's third millennium was for "the coexistence of difference and mutual respect." He believed that: "The more people discover difference, the more differences they can acknowledge and respect and the better they can congregate in an atmosphere of mutual understanding."

Especially since the second half of the twentieth century, man's mode of thinking has experienced tremendous change: in the past, the traditional logic paradigm was to begin from a bifurcation of the subjective and the objective as a means of viewing the world, accepting rules that are immutable, and stressing the inevitability of the innate character of objects. Meanwhile, the newly emerged phenomenological paradigm takes indeterminacy as its core, stresses the unity of the self and the object, believes that all things are subject to change according to changes in the subject's passion, desire and will, as well as, its position vis a vis the object being observed and from what angle. Most recently reciprocal cognition has been in vogue, and it relies heavily on a renewed recognition and discovery of the self from the perspective of the "other." For example, the French professor Francois Jullien believes that Westerners need to navigate China in order to better read Greece, "because we already have a certain inherent familiarity with Greek thought, and therefore, in order to understand it and discover it, we must temporarily cast aside this familiarity and construct some sort of external point of view," and China is precisely the best frame of reference for constructing this "external point of view" because "the Chinese language lies outside the huge Indo-European language system and what this type of language opens up is a different type of written possibility; the Chinese civilization has developed independently of any practical borrowing or relationship influences with Europe and is the culture with the longest history… China faces our ideology squarely from the outside —and therefore is unaffected by traditional preconceptions—an ideal situation."[1] At

[1]The preface of *Yuhui yu jinru* (Beijing: Sanlianshudian, 1998), p. 3.

the year 2000 "Pluralistic Beauty" international scholarly conference convened by the Comparative Literature and Comparative Culture Research Institute of Peking University, the great French master of comparative literature, Daniel-Henri Pageaux (from the New Sorbonne University in Paris) expressly pointed out: "Francois Jullien's study of Greek and Chinese cultures is a very good example. It precisely corroborates what I have already mentioned as the benefits to be gained from the realization of a 'transit' via the other." He continued to stress: "From the outline of this conference, I can see the importance of the concept of 'harmony' 和谐 ("Harmony and Homogeneity")… China's principle of 'harmony in diversity' will in the future become an important ethical resource which will enable us to realize in the third millennium the coexistence of difference and mutual respect." The works of a number of American sinologists also realized this epistemological change, including Roger Ames and David Hall's *Thinking Through Confucius* and Steven Shankman's *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, among others.

Thus, it can be seen that no matter whether we are trying to protect a harmonious multicultural society or to recognize the necessity for the mode itself to develop, valuing "difference" and persisting in the principle of "harmony in diversity" is currently an extremely important question. But to genuinely achieve this is not easy, the major obstruction stemming from two currently popular ideologies: the first is the ideology of globalization, including universalism, new Jacobinism, new conservatism, etc.; the second ideology belongs to postcolonial ultra-nationalism, cultural relativism and cultural exclusivity.

Following the rapid global growth in the scale of economic and scientific unification and the universality of the media, no region in the world can avoid experiencing some kind of powerful cultural attack at any time. This is also the reason why the ideology of universalism has burgeoned. Universalism holds that no matter whether subjectively or objectively, all nations and people must conform to certain types of defined social, political, and cultural paradigms which they believe to be superior. Like the members of the Jacobin Club during the French Revolution, they have no scruples about adopting all political, even military tactics to "speak on behalf of all humankind" and force their moral beliefs on others, eventually turning to moral tyranny, exacting a price of the sacrifice of the will and lives of millions in order to implement their own subjective beliefs. The new conservatives are slightly different to this. They believe that the beautiful objects and moral beliefs that mankind has commonly created over previous millennia cannot be buried by the progress of history, but rather, they repeatedly appear in different historical periods and that this is the "universality" that should be rightly respected in all ages and by all peoples. From a theoretical point of view, there is nothing incorrect in this. The question with them is that they believe that this type of "universal values" which is divorced from any concrete space-time context is not only eternal and immutable but even that it is universally applicable. They desperately worship abstract sameness and they universally deny any particularity/exceptionalism that may have been formed through historical or regional factors. What is even more important is the fact that the "universal values" that they revere so much are mostly confined to

Western value standards and have great difficulty in embracing other value concepts, and when they attempt to impose these one-sided personal value standards on others and experience resistance, they gradually morph into new Jacobins, resorting to violence and forming a new cultural hegemony, which has already been abandoned by the Chinese tradition.

In complete contrast to this "global ideology", the existing postcolonial nationalist movement believes that the things that the universalists indicate to be "universal" are arbitrary and rigid, and tend to be violently imposed on others. They are opposed to any structural restriction and that there is no middle ground or that there is any so-called universality but only totally unrelated exceptionalism. The flatness of postmodernism that they stress denies any relationship between phenomenon and essence, the inevitable and the coincidental, the universal and the exceptional or the signifier and signified (the so-called floating signifiers), and renders all objects as independent objects which lack any temporal continuity or spatial relationship. They only stress difference and ignore relationships. Cultural isolationism and cultural relativism both maintain, although with differences, opposition to mutual influence and exchange and suppress innovation. In fact, merely recognizing "difference" is far from sufficient. What is important is not mutual independence and different individual entities, but the group formed of different individual entities which maintain their original differences and which are linked through mutual understanding and respect. The concept of "Harmony and Homogeneity" that China's ancient teaching stresses means that despite the fact that all the different elements differ, nevertheless they are certainly not able to escape their mutual relationships and exist independently, and that the original meaning of "和" [harmony] was to find a way to coexist in the context of a network of considerably different relationships and different elements. In other words, how can we harmonize all the "differences" and achieve a new harmonious unity and allow all different entities to achieve a new development and form new and different entities.

The confrontation between the globalization ideology and nationalism is also a modern expression of the long-running traditional Western cultural debate of "the common versus the exceptional" or "the universal versus the special". As early as the Greek period, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* pointed out that the exceptional and the common cannot be separated. Hegel further incisively expounded on this and developed it. However, in these present unique circumstances, the two have experienced a deep rupture, and reconnecting and repairing this rupture is an important link in expanding multiculturalism, protecting the cultural ecology and ameliorating cultural conflict. Although China's "harmony in diversity" principle and the topic of "the universal and the exceptional" are not the same, still what it explores is how "different" objects which are each very special are able to coexist in mutual dependency and how they are able to coordinate and reach a new state of "harmony"和. And perhaps it is possible that this can also assist in resolving the rupture between "the common versus the exceptional" and "the universal versus the special."

17.3 III

In fact, in this age of global information, what man faces remains the most frequently confronted common questions throughout history, like questions of life and death, love and desire, i.e., questions of how individuals can survive spiritually and socially in harmony; or questions of the recognition of identity and power relationships, in other words, questions of mutual accommodation between people; or the relationship between man and his external environment, or to put it another way, the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. The pursuit of "harmony" in these fields has been a common goal of humanity from ancient times to the present both in China and in the rest of the world. However, this type of "universality" is expressed in completely different ways depending on the historical period, the region or the cultural context forms the defining feature of different cultures. It can be said that from time immemorial, all cultures have done their utmost to explore these commonly experienced and perplexing problems relating to the road to survival, and if we seek a profound understanding of what different cultures think about these problems and steadfastly engage in protracted interactive exchange, then perhaps we will be able to liberate ourselves from the present unidirectional, incomplete and biased globalization ideology.

In forging a connection between the common and the unique, developing multiculturalism and protecting the cultural ecology, along with other measures, the literature and art are able to make their own special contribution. Any great work of art reveals certain common facets of human experience and engenders in the admirer a sympathetic response. It simultaneously represents the personal experience of the artist himself, the individual imagination and the individual's beliefs. When a great work of art is being created, it always begins from one's own culture and constructs its own cultural rampart, giving it its own ethnic flavor. And when it is admired, because of people's perception of their shared experience, they cast aside the estrangement that otherwise exists between different cultures. If we wish to weaken, if not eliminate cultural hegemony and cultural isolationism, then the most basic and critical point is that of tolerance between ordinary people, together with communication and understanding. Literature relates more to human emotion and spirit and less to considerations of utility. The common themes of the literature of different cultural paradigms are invariably rich, such as "the consciousness of death," "the ecology and environment," "the last days of man," "the Utopian phenomenon," or "the idea of escaping the world," etc. The citizens of different cultural paradigms will form their own response to these questions in accordance with their dissimilar modes of life and thinking. And these responses will mirror the echo of a long historical tradition and at the same time, will be subject to the choices and interpretations of contemporary individuals and contemporary contexts. Through multiple and repeated dialogs between different cultural paradigms, our generation can achieve the most comprehensive solution to these questions, and at the same time, open up for them even broader horizons and prospects. And people's thoughts and emotions will achieve engagement and understanding through this.

Literary theory constructs new theories in this process and sums up the rich experience accrued over long periods by the literary creation of different cultural paradigms. India, Greece, the Arabs, Africa, and China all have their own unique understanding of these literary questions. If literary theory is to find penetrating solutions to literary questions then it cannot seek answers from within a closed cultural paradigm but must seek new solutions from all cultural relationships and dialogs. And as part of these new solutions, all cultural paradigms must make their own unique contribution. The future of literary theory may quite possibly be constructed in the process of mutual recognition, mutual affirmation, and complementarity between heterogeneous cultures. This type of literary theory will make an important contribution toward linking mankind's different cultures.

Interdisciplinary literary research is another pillar of future literary theory. Owing to the fact that the natural sciences are having an ever deepening influence on man's life, twenty-first century interdisciplinary literary research might concentrate even further on man's reaction to the development and challenges of science. Scientific development has presented a considerable number of new concepts that have not been seen before. In the nineteenth century, the theory of evolution completely refreshed all aspects of literary theory, literary criticism and literary creation, while in the twentieth century, systems theory, information theory, cybernetics, the second law of thermodynamics and the notion of entropy were certainly not less an influence on literature than the theory of evolution in the nineteenth century. If we say that the nineteenth century was the century of mechanical studies, and the twentieth century was the century of physics, then the twenty-first century promises to open up to mankind a biological century that he could never have dreamed of. Since the "human genome project" sequence was completed by a team of scientists from some six countries, the secret code of man's heredity will soon be cracked and mankind will then be able to start exploring and analyzing the blueprint of life. This will profoundly alter our current concepts of philosophy, ethics, and law, amongst others, and have an extremely significant influence on society and economics. As far as the research into the sequencing and variations of the genome is concerned, or the phenomenon of the "duplication" of organisms—even of man himself—thanks to cloning technology, or the impact of in vitro fertilization and "sperm banks" on traditional family relations and the myriads of moral and ethical questions raised by the reality of man's existence in the universal time-space continuum, etc., all of these have brought new challenges to the humanities and these questions without exception have first and foremost been reflected in the literature. Science fiction with its fantastic oddities of every description, science fiction movies describing a future where science separates itself off from human affairs, alienating itself to such an extent that it becomes a force that man is unable to control and the subsequently tragic prospect that man faces… all of these still await future exposition. Interdisciplinary literary research and especially the rapprochement between the natural sciences and literary research will open a brand new page for the development of literary theory. In the new century, like in other fields, literary theory and the humanities will certainly experience unimaginable turmoil and renewal. Currently a considerable number of young

people are discussing the irrelevance and future demise of literary theory, but the reason we continue to hold a thread of hope is because the literary theory that we have in mind is built on a completely new multicultural and interdisciplinary foundation and that it will in the future be of benefit to the mutual engagement and mutual understanding of mankind.

Not to mince words, mankind is currently experiencing an unprecedented and extremely unpredictable new era. Under the shadow of global "unification," promoting heterogeneous cultural development, strengthening the understanding and tolerance between peoples, and opening up and broadening all channels of communication is perhaps the only hope for saving human civilization. I believe that, grounded in China's cultural heritage and as an integral part of international cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary literary research, China's comparative literature will in the future play a unique role in doing away with the ideology of globalism and improving the dispersed, isolated, and marooned conditions that postmodernism has created.

Chapter 18
Qing in Chinese Culture

Qing [passion/affection/emotion] is an important keyword in traditional Chinese culture. The Guodian Chu Slips "Human Nature Derives from the [Heavenly] Mandate"[1] document which was recently unearthed and which was written more than 200 years BCE is a clear account of this: "The *Dao* [Way] begins with *qing*, *qing* derives from [human] nature, [human] nature derives from the [Heavenly] mandate, and the [Heavenly] mandate is bestowed by Heaven." But why does the "*Dao* begin with *qing*"? The *Dao* spoken of here refers to that *Dao* that can be uttered, and not the constant *Dao* which towers over everything and cannot be spoken of, the "*Dao* that can be spoken of is not the constant *Dao*".[2] This is demonstrated by the statement "Only the human *Dao* can be spoken of" from the fourth passage of the nineth section of the chapter entitled *Human Nature Derives from the [Heavenly] Mandate*. We can see that the "*Dao*" mentioned in the phrase "The *Dao* begins with *qing*" refers to the human *Dao* (or human Way), the *Dao* that can be verbalized; in other words, it is the social *Dao* or the *Dao* of what it is to be a human being. "The *Dao* begins with *qing*" means that the "*Dao* of being human" begins with "passion/affection/feelings" (*qing*) and that the origin of society and man begins first of all with the "passion/affection/feelings" that exist between people. The "*qing*" in the expression "*qing* derives from [human] nature" is something that springs from the innate nature of man, and that man's innate nature in turn is assigned by the will of Heaven. According to the Confucian theory of the Will of Heaven 天命, it has many meanings, but it can generally be described as a force and an inevitability that both transcends all things and at the same time regulates all things. "The mandate is bestowed by Heaven" means that the existence of *qing* is not determined by the will of man, but is rather a manifestation of the inevitability and purpose of "Heaven" as a force that is external to man.

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[1]Unearthed in 1993 from Tomb no. 1 of the Guodian tombs in Jingmen, Hubei Province, and dated to the latter half of the Warring States period.
[2]Laozi, *Dao de jing*: "dao ke dao, fei chang dao".

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Why do we say that the social *Dao* and the human *Dao* begin with "passion/affection/feelings"? To the Confucians, this type of innate "*qing*" is initially manifest in the familial affection between father and mother, sons, and daughters. If one possesses this sentiment of love for one's own relatives/family, then one is able to "extend this to all men," and become someone who "reveres others' elders as one reveres one's own elders and loves others' juniors as one loves one's own juniors" and thus build this into a society. Thus it is the starting point for social life. The *Guodian Chu Slips: the* Dao *of Tang Yao and Yu Shun* 《郭店竹简·唐虞之道》 states: "If one extends the filial piety [that one practices within one's family] then one will love all people under heaven" 孝之放,爰天下之民. If we extend the love of a father and mother, we arrive at the common people's love for everything under heaven. Hence the *Book of Rites: Doctrine of the Mean* states: "If one's emotions have not been expressed then one's nature is in its primal state." It then goes on to say: "To be benevolent [仁] is to be human. Familial relations are of the utmost importance." Mencius also states: "Familial relationships are benevolence." The social ethics of the Confucians of the pre-Qin is based on Confucius' "humanity" 仁学 which is an extended "familial affection." China's ancient society was a patriarchal clan society with the family as the core and familial affection is the foundation for keeping the family together. By extension, it is also the foundation for keeping the society as a whole together.

Since "*qing* derives from [human] nature," what then is the relationship between "*qing*" and "*xing*/性/nature"? It can be said that "*xing*" is static and closeted deeply within. As Mencius stated, all men have a "compassionate heart," a "heart of shame," a "respectful heart," and a "heart [which can distinguish between] right and wrong." With their Heaven-bestowed nature deeply ensconced within, if it is stimulated by "objects" [物] (i.e., things external to oneself), then [that nature] is expressed in all manner of "passions/affections/emotions" [*qing*]. "When *xing* is expressed externally" then it is called "*qing*" and thus it is said that "*xing* is static and *qing* is active." The most vivid formulation of the doctrine of "*xing* is static and *qing* is active" is perhaps to be found in He Chang's words in *The True Meaning of the Book of Rites* where he says: "The relationship between nature and *qing* is like that of waves and water. When tranquil, it is water. When in motion, it is a wave. When tranquil, it is nature (*xing*). When in motion, it is *qing*." The *Book of Rites: Record of Music* also states: "People are born tranquil. That is the nature of heaven. When they are stimulated by objects, appetite/desire is born." This "appetite or desire" is in fact "*qing,*"

So what is the relationship between "*qing*" and "*yu* [desire/appetite/passion]"? The Confucian philosopher Xun Zi 荀子 insisted that "[human] nature is evil." He frequently discussed "*qing*" and "*yu*" separately, arguing that unbridled "*yu*" is the source of "evil." But he still recognized that "*yu*" existed naturally and reasonably. He states: "Ordinary people have things in common: a desire for food when hungry, a desire for warmth when cold, a desire for a break when exhausted, a preference for things that are beneficial and abhorring things that are detrimental. Humans are born with all of these and not by any other means, and these were possessed intrinsically by Yu and Jie." The important point is to "use resources sparingly and manage desires".

"While we cannot eliminate desires, we need to try to limit them." However there were also a number of Confucians who did not separate out "sentiment/affection" [*qing*] from "desire" [*yu*] as two discrete concepts. For example, the *Book of Rites: Li Yu* states: "What is this human *qing*? It is those seven things that you obtain without having to learn them, namely pleasure (*xi*), anger (*nu*), sorrow (*ai*), fear (*ju*), love (*ai*), abhorrence (*wu*), and desire (*yu*)." Here *yu* is used to refer to a type of "human sentiment or emotion" (*renqing*), or perhaps to refer to what this passage later refers to as "eating and drinking and the relationship between man and woman are the essential desires of humans," confirming that "eating and drinking and the relationship between men and women" are natural demands of human nature (*renxing*). Thus Gao Zi 告子 states: "Food and sex are natural to humans". The Confucians were not opposed to "*qing*" and "*yu,*" however they advocated the moderation of "the desires of the affections" (*qingyu*). The *Spring and Autumn of Master Lü* points out: "Men are intrinsically greedy and possessed of desires. There is *qing* in their desires and their *qing* is moderated. The sage cultivates moderation to limit desire so as not to over express his *qing*, The desire of the ear for the five tones, the desire of the eyes for the five colors, and the desire of the mouth for the five tastes is all about *qing*. These three things are sought by all, no matter whether noble or lowly, foolish or wise, venerable or unworthy. Both Shennong and the Yellow Emperor shared the same desires as Jie and Zhou when faced with these three things. These two things are the essence of life and death." As to whether "*qingyu*" should be moderated and if it is moderated, whether it should be seen as "the essence of life and death," we need only look at the emphasis they place on the moderation of "the desires of the affections." Zhu Xi speaks most eloquently of "the desires of the affections." He states: "The reason why [human] nature is as still as water when static, and why it is as turbulent as water when in motion is that desire causes it to flow excessively." He believes that if we liken *qing* to water and *yu* to a raging torrent, then he argues that "[human] nature is static while *qing* is dynamic" and that "desire" is an unmoderated and raging torrent of *qing*.

So we can see that the basic attitude of the Confucians to *qing* and *yu* was one of moderation or control. The Daoists, on the other hand, were different, even though Zhuang Zi believed that we should "minimize one's desires in terms of number and intensity and [if we achieved this, then] this would be an internal [triumph]." Nevertheless, his basic principle was one of conforming to nature, and not any human "moderation." He believed that the greatest attribute of the "sagely man" was to "fully understand the will of Heaven as well as [one's own] *qing,*" Cheng Xuanying annotated this, saying: "If one were to fully understand the will of Heaven with regards [human] nature and also to do one's best to understand the *qing* of living things, then one's life on earth would be delightful and replete." So long as the spontaneity is genuine, what need is there for moderation? Thus, "If one does not distance oneself from the natural emotions, then how can one conduct the rites and music?" And the most fundamental attribute of *qing* is that it is natural and candid. In the expression "if the emotions are candid/genuine," what is this candidness or genuineness? Zhuang Zi states: "The genuine is the most quintessential, the most sincere. What fails to be quintessential and sincere cannot move others. Thus if someone is forced to tears they will not be saddened no matter how

grief-stricken they may appear. If someone is forced into a rage, although they may appear stern they will not strike awe. And if you affect affection, no matter how much you smile, that smile will not be returned. Genuine sorrow saddens without the utterance of a sound; genuine rage strikes awe before it is expressed; and genuine affection is returned bore you even smile. The person who is true internally will move all around him masterfully. This is why we value the genuine." Genuineness means that which is natural: "The genuine, then, is bestowed by Heaven and thus cannot be altered by nature. Thus the sagely abide by the laws of Heaven, uphold the genuine and do not conform to popular customs, whereas the foolish do the complete opposite." In a word, anyone who can "understand *qing* and the will of Heaven clearly" is a sage. [The only drawback is that] "Matters of shame" continue to "tempt his genuine nature by means of profit and force him to change the *qing* of his [human] nature." This is because profit confuses the false with the genuine, forcing the natural *qing* to conform to a certain power dynamic. In the final analysis, Zhuang Zi's ideology is the same as the *Guodian Chu Slips: Nature Derives from the [Heavenly] Mandate* discourse. It stresses the fact that the natural *qing* is the root of the *Dao*, and thus he states, "The *Dao* is of *qing*, of truthfulness, of formlessness and letting things take their own course" (the Daoists' advocacy regarding *qing* will be discussed somewhere else).

The Confucians stressed "moderation," but what exactly is this moderation and how is moderation executed? The standard of "moderation" is *li* (propriety/rites/etiquette/courtesy), and to be basis of *li* is "difference and rank." Although the Confucian social ethics are based on the family or clan's "familial affection" and "extending the [treatment of the] self to others," nevertheless, one's love for others can never be the same as one's love for one's own family, hence there will inevitably be "differences and levels of love." The first chapter of *The Analects* states: "A young man should be a filial son at home and an obedient young man abroad, sparing of speech but trustworthy in what he says, and should love the multitude at large." "Love of the multitude" is derived from "filial piety and fraternal duty" and not from a "general love" of all men without distinction. This is fundamentally different from the ethical foundation of Christianity, namely that "God loves all the people of the world." If there are "gradations" [of love], then there must be some standard whereby to measure these "gradations" which will enable each to be content with his/her lot and so maintain social stability. This standard is *li*, because *li* begins with familial relations, therefore the Confucians insist that *li* is not baselessly formulated, but is rather born of *qing*. The *Guodian Bamboo Slips: Yucong I* clearly points out: "The rites derive from *qing*, and practicing the rites is for the benefit of man's *qing*." Meanwhile, "*Qing* derives from [human] nature and the rites derive from *qing*." Sima Qian also states: "I approached the officials administering the rites and observed the advantages and disadvantages of rites in the Three Periods. I find that practicing the rites is based on human *qing*, and the performance of ceremony is based on human nature. Rites and ceremonies have existed for a long time." In the *Li Lun*, Xun Zi stresses even further the function of *li* is in "curbing the passions."

However, in fact, as soon as *li* is formed, and is consolidated, then it places strict limitations on the *qing*. Although, *li* is born of *qing*, nevertheless it develops independently and gradually morphs into such standards of behavior as Benevolence 仁, Righteousness义, Propriety礼, Wisdom 智 and Truthfulness 信. Thus it is said that "The beginning of the evolution of the *Dao* approaches *qing* and the end of the evolution of the *Dao* approaches righteousness" (*Nature Derives from the [Heavenly] Mandate*). "Propriety" ultimately determines a person's social status and behavior. The *qing* that "fails to observe [the rules of] propriety" is subject to the extreme pressure of the social code of ethics, a pressure that is not only external but also pervades the deepest heart of man and becomes a yoke on human nature which is difficult to throw off. This has formed in Chinese culture an extremely unique phenomenon: on the one hand, *qing* has been elevated to the exalted status of the source of all actions, whilst on the other, *qing* is restrained to the lowest level [of social conduct] where it is virtually suffocated by all measure of social ethics and morality. Perhaps it is because of the extreme focus on it that at all times it is subject to control and restrictions, even prohibition.

This type of phenomenon is reflected prominently in literature. The Chinese literary classic "Preface to the *Book of Songs*" points out that the basic essence of poetry is *qing*: "*Qing* is stirred by motion and expressed in words. When words are not adequate, they intone. When intoning is not adequate, they chant." But it quickly goes on to say that any *qing* must be "restrained by propriety and righteousness": "It is the nature of the people to express their *qing*, but restraining [oneself] by means of propriety and righteousness is [a tradition which has been] passed down from earlier kings." This principle therefore became an impassable barrier for Chinese literature whenever *qing* is being expressed. This social pressure/confinement of *qing* can be seen right throughout Chinese fiction. What is important to note is that this type of shackling of *qing* is not only expressed in the attitude of "look at nothing that is not consistent with propriety" or "touch nothing that is not consistent with propriety" as far as real life is concerned, but it is also deeply rooted in people's minds and is constantly gagging people's emotions. Western literature also frequently describes society's confinement of *qing*, but what is mostly discussed is external oppression and very rarely touches on deep personal self-constraint. Shakespeare's Juliet and Cao Xueqin's Lin Daiyu both died for "love" (*qing*), but the former was able to seek it while the latter was never able to verbalize it, let alone act on it! And although Du Liniang[3] ached to express the "love" that she felt, she was only able to "come back to life" after she had died. A considerable number of beautiful Chinese love stories could only be expressed vicariously through imagination or as ghosts or vixen.

If "love/affection" *qing* must be moderated by propriety/decorum, then it must, by necessity, distance itself from "desire/passion" which is born naturally also of "love/affection". In traditional Chinese literature, *qing* and *yu* are basically completely separated. Jia Baoyu may yearn for Xue Baochai's tender arms that are

[3]Character from Tang Xianzu's play *The Peony Pavilion*.

adorned with a jade brooch,[4] or have "sexual fantasies" about the already married Qin Keqing, however when it comes to his true love Lin Daiyu, there is only purity and innocence and no hint of desire. The two lovers Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai shared the same bed but all the whilst, a dish of fresh water always lay between them and they believed that this was a sacred boundary that they dare not cross. As for such individuals as Cui Yingying and Zhuo Wenjun who were linked to "passion," they were seen as "scarlet women," and have been consistently judged harshly by traditional men of letters. Although Western literature also has its platonic love, and distinguishes between the chaste and the harlot, nevertheless, on the whole, "love/affection" and "passion/desire" are linked and it is mostly believed that "passion/desire" and "love/affection" are related, that it is the natural result of "affection." Because of [the notion that] "*qing* is stirred by emotion" and hence the necessity of "being restrained by propriety and righteousness" and "not proceeding to a situation of chaos" this kind of yoke has penetrated the very marrow of Chinese literature and cannot avoid producing scenarios that today appear quite ludicrous. Chapter 9 of the *Travels of Lao Can* depicts a scene where a young girl meets up with her male partner alone in the dead of night and this is how it is described: "The Preface to *Guan Ju* says that 'When you express your emotion [*qing*] you must temper it with propriety and righteousness.' 'Expressing one's emotions' is a natural state. For instance, this evening distinguished guests have graced me with their presence, so how could I not but be pleased and express my emotion? … A young woman and a young man sit facing each other in the dead of night. They do not conduct themselves improperly. This is what is called 'being restrained by propriety and righteousness'. This is the way of the sage." Although this scene is not without its irony, nevertheless it is quite common in traditional Chinese fiction.

Because of the long suppression by "decorum and righteousness," the status of *qing* in Chinese traditional fiction, this bedrock of literary creation, has found it extremely difficult to break out of the following patterns: The first is illusoriness. Like the Land of the Grand Illusion in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, *qing* can only be found in such places as the banks of the spirit river, the edges of the stone of three lives, or the Vermillion Palace of Parting and Regret which lies beyond the heavens; The second is [creating a] distance, stretching the distance between the temporal and the spatial and using an endless array of "Waiting for Godot" type delaying tropes to emasculate emotion, causing it to submit. For example, such traditions as the Cowherd and the Weaver Maid or The Petrified Faithful Wife Awaiting her Husband's Return and Wang Baochuan's 18 year lone vigil in a deserted cave; The Third is the taming of morality, subjugating it to the moral norms of rites and righteousness, such as in the epic poem *The Peacocks Fly to the Southwest*. Yang Zhouhan has pointed out that in contrast to Western literature, China has very few poems which depict premarital passion and in fact have many more melancholic poems which mourn the death of a wife, and I am afraid that herein lies the reason. The fourth is utilitarian. Unfortunate stories of "chaos,"

[4]See Chapter 28 of *Dream of the Red Mansions*.

which is brought on by "giving vent to one's emotions" whilst not being "constrained by propriety and righteousness" serve as negative examples and warn people. They also achieve the goal of "comprehending the *Dao* through one's emotions" and "revealing fantasy through fantasy". Some also argue that *A Dream of Red Mansions* also "uses 'the red dust [i.e., the chaotic world]' as a means of 'seeing through [the emptiness of] this chaotic world'/being disillusioned with this mortal world,"[5] which is rather persuasive. A number of short stories constitute even more footnotes to "seeing through [the emptiness of] this chaotic world/being disillusioned with this mortal world" and exacting "karmic retribution".

Naturally, there are other patterns which are completely different to those mentioned above. For example the Goddess of Mount Wu who resides in "the North of Mount Wu and the dangerous pass of Mount Gaoqiu where there are clouds at dawn and rain at dusk" and who is praised so highly by Song Yu in "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine" and "*Fu* on the goddess". She voluntarily attends a welcoming banquet for King Huai of Chu and "offers to share her bed with him," but when King Huai's son returns to the cloud dream terrace and sees the Goddess again, she initially hesitates, "her heart seems close yet distant" and "she appears to approach but then she turns back." "She is somewhat peeved and restrains herself." She "will not be violated" and so she finally "shakes her jade pendants, rings her chariot bell, straightens up her gown and sets her face, and is about to leave." She cares not how Prince Xiang "weeps with melancholia and begs her to stay until dawn." It was all to no avail. Some scholars argue that the different attitudes of the Goddess on the two occasions that she appears reflects a suppression of the "base self/Id" by the "superior self/superego." In reality, we are unable to identify any suppression or constraint in the image of the Goddess. On the contrary, what is depicted is a living independent woman who appears out of nowhere and leaves without a trace, someone who is temperamental, who vents her spleen at will and comes and goes as she pleases. If she were a truly "decorous" person whose "greater self" had overcome her "base self," then how could she appear so nonchalantly in King Huai's dreamscape, "offer to share her bed with him" and ignore Prince Xiang, the son of this king? The Goddess of Wu Shan, under Song Yu's pen, like the mountain spirits which Qu Yuan creates, are both free spirits who live life to the full according to their own desires. They were the first characters to display on the stage of Chinese literary history the beauty and rich tapestry of feminine independence. Unfortunately the "passion" qing, unimpeded by any considerations of "decorum" that they represented and embodied was not developed further in official literature, but rather became deeply secreted in the flow of popular literature.

Under this atmosphere of total oppression, in contrast to the stifling of "passion" (*qing*) in literary creation, no matter whether in Chinese fiction theory or in poetics, research and an emphasis on "genuine *qing*" between human beings is totally inadequate. Research into "genuine *qing*" is invariably subsumed within the research on "*qing* and reason" and "*qing* and scenery". For example, *The Literary*

[5]Ye Shuxian, *Jiqing* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2003).

Mind and the Carving of Dragons often mentions "*qing,*" but in the vast majority of cases it is linked to reason 理. "The interaction between *qing* and prospect" and "the fusion of *qing* and the natural landscape" has been acknowledged in Chinese literary discussions even more as the most fundamental creative concept in artistic creation. As Xie Zhen 谢榛 says in the *Four Seas Poetic Discussions* 《四溟诗话》: "A fusion of *qing* with the natural landscape makes poetry, which is what writers do naturally." "When *qing* is expressed and prospect is depicted, the power and aroma of the poetry is extraordinary." This has historically been recognized as the hallmark of a poem of the highest quality. As to an analysis of "genuine *qing,*" despite the fact that Lu Ji 陆机 (261–303) long since stressed: "Poetry is adorned by means of *qing,*" nevertheless it has never been able to be comprehensively developed, and in the fiction and drama theory that followed, any analysis of "qing," and especially any psychoanalysis of "genuine qing," is even more frequently silent.

The *Guodian Chu Slips* proposed that "the *Dao* begins with *qing,*" and Chinese culture has already afforded *qing* an extremely elevated position. However, at the same time, it has stipulated that "the beginning of the evolution of the *Dao* approaches *qing* and the end of the evolution of the *Dao* approaches righteousness," and any *qing* that arises from one's inner being, if it is ever expressed through external actions, it cannot avoid being constrained and shackled by "decorum," or even itself evolving into "decorum and righteousness." This aspect completed the highest ideal of the Confucians, namely "achieving wisdom by being moderate," refraining from going to extremes and eschewing exuberance, and it contributed the principle of the "beauty of moderation" 中和之美 to Chinese literature and art. In another respect, it unavoidably strangled and repressed natural passion, i.e., the candid and genuine human nature which the Daoists had championed for millennia.

Chapter 19
The Mirror Metaphor in Chinese and Western Poetics

19.1 I

Analogy is an important channel for mankind to make sense of the world. A metaphor, if it is used occasionally, only addresses a specific question at a specific time and space. If it is used in a certain domain many times and becomes the common basis for explaining a certain theory, then it will itself become an integral part of the architecture of that theory. Under these circumstances, researching this metaphor becomes one aspect of understanding the theory. In Sino-Western poetics, the mirror belongs to this type of metaphor.

Beginning with Plato, the West has used the mirror as a metaphor to illustrate the emulation properties of literature and art. He believed that an artist is like a rotating mirror, "If you take a mirror and turn it in various directions, you will immediately generate a sun, stars, the earth, yourself, other creatures, implements, vegetation …"[1] To his mind, painting, poetry, music, dance, and sculpture are all imitation, like an image in a mirror. After Plato, the mirror metaphor continued to be used for a long time in the field of poetics, at the same time producing many derivative meanings and uses.

Following the logic of Plato's thinking, a number of Western scholars of poetry used the mirror in works of art to metaphorically reflect the world that surrounds them. The term transference had already been made famous by the renowned ancient Roman master of rhetoric, Cicero, who stated that comedy was "an imitation of life, a mirror to convention and a reflection of reality."[2] This statement has been used widely. Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey* has been termed "A mirror to

[1]Plato, *Lixiangguo*, in *Wenyi duihua ji*, Xin wenyi chubanshe, 1957, p. 112.
[2]This statement has been used widely and been handed down from the mouth of the ancient Roman orator and rhetorician Cicero's (106–43 BCE) own mouth. See G.G. Smith (ed.) *Yilishabai shiqi piping wenxuan* [Elizabethan critical essays], Vol. 1, pp. 369–370.

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the life of man,"[3] and Shakespeare's work has also been recognized in the following manner: "This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life."[4]

However, the mirror metaphor ultimately uses a two-dimensional flat surface to reflect life which is multidimensional, and when the novel burgeoned in the nineteenth century, a time when the life that was being reflected was even more complex, the mirror metaphor was imbued with a dynamic quality. For example, the notable French author Stendhal stated: "the novel is a mirror galloping along the high road,"[5] meaning that literature should reflect life in motion. Whilst discussing Picasso's art, Kafka further noted that Picasso's art "is a mirror which goes 'fast' like a watch," and that he "only registers the deformities which have not yet penetrated our consciousness."[6]

However, art ultimately is not simply a reflection of the objective world. It is intimately connected to the author's ideology and emotions. The sixteenth century English poet Christopher Marlowe began to hint that poetry not only reflected the surrounding objective reality, but at the same time it reflected the poet's subjective spirit. He states: "Poetry is like a flower that never withers or decays, and from poetry we can observe the very greatest achievements of human sagacity, just as if they were reflected in a mirror."[7] The vanguard of the romanticists, the German poet Goethe further borrowed the tongue of young Werther to shout: "Oh, would I could describe these conceptions, could impress upon paper all that is living so full and warm within me, that it might be the mirror of my soul, as my soul is the mirror of the infinite God!"[8] Here what Goethe stresses are that works not only reflects the outside world, but they also reflect the soul of the author, and that the author's soul is like a mirror, reflecting the will of God. The English romantic poet Shelly further pointed out: "Poetry is a remarkably true reflection of life, manifesting its eternal truth." He believed that a real historical tale could also reflect reality like a mirror, but that it would invariably be clouded and not brilliant enough and that through its dullness it will misrepresent the original beauty of the object. "Poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted."[9] Shelly infused new meaning into

[3]Aristotle, "Xiucishu," in *Yalishiduode quanji* (Beijing: Renmin daxue chubanshe, 1994), Vol. 9, p. 503.

[4]Samuel Johnson, "The Preface to Shakespeare." From his annotated edition of Shakespeare's Plays, published in 1765. https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/j/johnson/samuel/preface/index.html [accessed 28/8/2015].

[5]Taken from *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 640.

[6]Quoted from Feng Xianguang, "Yishu bijing shi yimian yingzhao rensheng de jingzi," *Wenyibao*, 30th June, 1990.

[7]Taken from M. H. Abrams, *Jing yu deng* [The Mirror and the Lamp] (Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1989), p. 363.

[8]J.W. von Goethe, "The Sorrows of Young Werther." Available at https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2527/2527–h/2527–h.htm [accessed 28/8/2015].

[9]Shelly, "A Defence of Poetry."

the mirror metaphor: this is not an ordinary mirror but one that is able to beautify a distorted object. It only reflects the beautiful side of life. When Lenin suggests that "Tolstoy is a mirror to the Russian Revolution," he is not only using the mirror metaphor in the normal sense of reflection, but that it is able to reflect certain essential qualities as well. Lenin raises the question: "To identify the great artist with the revolution which he has obviously failed to understand, and from which he obviously stands aloof, may at first sight seem strange and artificial. A mirror which does not reflect things correctly could hardly be called a mirror." He goes on to point out that Tolstoy's works "must have reflected in his work at least some of the essential aspects of the revolution," "the contradictions in Tolstoy's views are indeed a mirror of those contradictory conditions in which the peasantry had to play their historical part in our revolution."[10] So we can see that the mirror metaphor mobilized by Lenin not only reflected a shallow reality, but that it penetratingly utilized the reflection of fundamental essence.

No matter whether reflecting the life around them or the author's subjective ideology and emotions or reflecting beauty or fundamental essence, Western poetics often uses a work of art like a mirror. And as to the mirror itself, the first thing that is stressed is its true to life character, and not only superficial truth but also fundamental essential truth. Not only does it reflect the true reality of the external world, but also the true reality of the innermost spirit. And it is not only a static reflection, but a dynamic one as well.

19.2 II

The mirror in Chinese poetics is also a metaphor that has always been mobilized to illustrate the fundamental nature of the literature and art. But its use is quite different to its use in the West. A century before Plato, Lao Zi already used this metaphor of the mirror. He used the mirror to represent the heart of man. Chapter 10 of the *Dao De Jing* states: "When one has cleansed away the most mysterious sights (of one's imagination), one can become without a flaw."[11] Lao Zi believes that man's heart is just like a mirror. It must be scrubbed clean to remove any blemishes. Then about a century or so later than Plato, Zhuang Zi went further: "The motivation of the virtuous man is like a mirror; he does not dominate nor retaliate; he should not hold on to anything and only then is he able to observe the world without being harmed by it."[12] He believed that a man's heart, like a mirror, is able to equitably and beautifully reflect the objects around it and the reason why a mirror is able to act like this is because it is not prejudiced and conceals nothing. Zhuang

[10]V.I.Lenin, "Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution." Available at Marxists Internet Archive https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1908/sep/11.htm [accessed 28/8/2015].

[11]Adapted from Chinese Text Project http://ctext.org/dao–de–jing [accessed 26/8/2015].

[12]Zhuang Zi, "Ying diwang."

Zi also states: "If a body of water is still, then it can clearly illuminate the face; it's like a balance—even the master craftsman could use it as a tool. When water is still, it is very clear and bright, just like the spirit of man! A mirror to the universe, a mirror to all things."[13] Only if one maintains the clear and still heart of a sage is one able to meticulously and accurately understand the myriad objects of the world. Hence it is said: "If one possesses the heart of a sage, then one is able to reflect the sentiments of all things."[14]

From the time that Buddhism entered China, the mirror metaphor gained another level of meaning, namely that of "emptiness" (*kong*) and the "virtual or false" (*xu*). The Eastern Jin's Sengzhao of Chang'an[15] (385–414) believed: "There is both light and darkness in the void of the sagely man's heart/mind: all reason is linked, and he encompasses all things in his breast, is perceptive beyond measure and able to reflect everything in great detail, and his spirit is always in a state of *xu* [void, emptiness]."[16] This obviously springs from the same font as Zhuang Zi's "The motivation of the virtuous man is like a mirror." But he not only stresses the "truth" that a mirror "does not dominate nor retaliate" and the "reality" that it "should not hold on to anything," he stresses, first and foremost, the "virtual or false" character of the mirror. It is precisely because the mirror itself contains no object that it is capable of "encompassing everything" and "reflecting all things," and if it contains any preexisting reflection or blemish, then it will be incapable of reflecting the world accurately.

At the end of the Tang Dynasty, the Zen (Chan) master Liangjie of Dongshan in his work *The Precious Mirror Samadhi* further argued that the three elements of the mirror (i.e. the heart), form (i.e., material objects) and shadow (i.e., objects in the mirror) are all illusory. He states: "Before the precious mirror, the form and the reflection gaze on each other; I am not he, but he is really me."[17] Form is not a shadow, but a shadow *is* form. If we "use a mirror to reflect a mirror," then the illusory shadow of a form will extend infinitely. The *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* and the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* both discuss Buddhism's devout instructions. It regularly recommends placing a number of round mirrors in every conceivable position, with the "mirrors facing each other" such that "the images in the mirror are reflected infinitely" and they "illuminate each other," in order to illustrate the fact that all living things are but a speck in a mirror's reflection, just like "the reflection of moonlight on 10,000 streams:" as one of these "specks," there is only one "moon," but the number of human affairs are limitless, like the moon's reflection on the "10,000 streams." The *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* records that in order to make a similar point, the monk Fazang[18] selected 10 mirrors and "Positioned them in all

[13]Zhuang Zi, "Tiandao."

[14]*Huainanzi – qisu*.

[15]Early Chinese Buddhist philosopher.

[16]*Zhaolun – niepan wuminglun – miaocun diqi*.

[17]Puji, *Wudeng huiyuan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), p. 784.

[18]Tang Dynasty monk (643–712).

directions, in two parallel rows just over one *zhang* [approx. 303 cm.] apart, facing each other. He placed an image of the Buddha in the middle and illuminated it with a lighted candle and the light reflected off it.[19]

The Daoists have similar metaphors. The work of the late Tang Daoist priest Tan Xiao 谭肖, the *Book of Transformations: Chapter 1: Transformations of the* Dao 《化书·道化第一》, states: "Reflect one form in a mirror and reflect another form in another mirror, then face the mirrors at each other and the reflections will reflect off one another. There is no difference between the form and the reflection; there is no difference between the reflection and the form." In a word, mutual reflection between an object and its reflection is all illusion.

19.3 III

Chinese poetics are heavily influenced by Buddhism and Daoism. When commentators on poetry use the mirror metaphor, on the one hand they highlight its "stillness" 靜, whilst on the other they stress its "virtual character or emptiness" 虛. The Ming commentator Xie Zhen has likened the poet's heart/mind 心 to a mirror. He states:

> I observe many vistas and am full of emotion. I stand and gaze. It is as if before me are arranged a row of mirrors and everything appears genuine. There is no difference between despondency and joy. From the side or the front, I am of one mind. From the side I can see a half, but from the front I can see the whole. The mirror is like a heart/mind and its light is like the soul.[20]

Apart from "stillness," "genuineness," and "uprightness" have also been highlighted as distinctive features of a mirror. Only the heart of a sincere and upright poet is able to portray the "10,000 scenes and seven emotions" both objectively and subjectively. The use of the mirror to describe the "still," "genuine," and "upright" heart of a poet appears regularly in Chinese poetics, right up to the twentieth century when the renowned modern poet Guo Moruo employs the mirror metaphor in a similar sense. He says: "To my mind, the poet's demeanor is like a stretch of pure and clear ocean. When there is no wind, it is still, just like a mirror. The myriad images of the universe are all reflected within it…[21]

But clarity and stillness is not sufficient. There must also be virtual emptiness 虛空. The Ming Dynasty philosopher Wang Yangming's disciple Xu Ai has remarked: "The heart is like a mirror. The sage's heart is a bright mirror and the

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[19]Zan Ning: *Song gaoseng zhuan* [*Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), p. 89.

[20]Xie Zhen, *Siming shihua* [Four Seas Poetic Discussions] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1961), p. 71.

[21]Guo Moruo, "Lunshi sanzha," in *Moruo wenji* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1959), Vol. 10, p. 205.

common man's heart is like a cloudy mirror." The "cloudy mirror" refers to a mirror which contains an object and so is not "empty and bright." Thus, Wang Yangming says: "The sage's heart is like a bright mirror. It is only a light, but it reacts to emotion. There is no object that it does not reflect. There is no pre-existing form that remains and there is no reflection of anything that is yet to exist… One should only fear that the mirror is not bright; one should not fear that there is anything that it is not capable of reflecting." If it contains "an image from the past" or "an image from the future," then the mirror becomes a "cloudy mirror" and it must be "vigorously cleaned," "cleaned until it is bright and clear."[22]

From the point of view of poetry/poetics, the poet must have a vacant 虚 and blank 空 heart/mind before he/she can write good poets. Thus, Lu Ji 陆机 stresses that at the beginning of the creative process, the poet must first of all "close his eyes and ears" and only then can he "think deeply and research widely." His "vital spirit [will then] soar to the four corners of the earth and his heart roam a thousand leagues."[23] In other words, only when one ceases to observe and listen, and when one's heart/mind does not wander, then one is able to ponder deeply and seek broadly, allowing the spirit to roam to the four corners of the earth and the soul to drift a thousand leagues. In his "Seeing Off Cen Liao," Su Dongpo notes:

> If you want your poetic phrases to be marvelous
> Do not be averse to emptiness and quietude.
> With quietude you comprehend all movement,
> With emptiness you take in ten thousand scenes.[24]

Having a heart that is "still" and "empty" is an important requisite for appreciating beauty and artistic creation.

To summarize our discussion, Chinese poetics often does not use the mirror to symbolize a work of art, but rather to symbolize the author's heart. If we say that the mirror metaphor in Western poetics stresses trueness to life, completeness, and quick-wittedness, then the mirror metaphor in Chinese poetics stresses vacancy and illusion, fairness, and honesty and empty quietude.

In addition, China's classics have another use for the mirror, according to which the mirror is not compared to either a work of art or the author's heart, but represents the context and environment of the author's own image of the author himself. Long ago, Mo Zi declared in his famous essay "Condemnation of Offensive War:" "The superior man does not use water as a mirror, he uses men. If you use water as a mirror, you only see your appearance, but if you use man as a mirror, then you will know good and bad fortune." Emperor Taizong of Tang also liked to say: "When I use my copper mirror, I can arrange my clothes and crown;

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[22]Wang Yangming, "Chuanxi lu," in *Wang Yangming quanji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), p. 12 and p. 20.

[23]Lu Ji, *Wenfu*.

[24]Translation by Ron Egan. Taken from Zong–Qi Cai (ed.), *How To Read Chinese Poetry, A Guided Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Available at http://www.mountainsongs.net/poem_php?id=1047 [viewed 11/9/2015].

when I use the past as a mirror, I can understand [the reason for dynastic] rise and decline; when I use man as a mirror, I can understand success and failure; and if I keep these three mirrors by me, then I will prevent myself from doing wrong."[25] This is naturally fundamentally different to the "mirror stage" of the contemporary representative of psychoanalysis, Jaques Lacan Lacan; however, the point about the use of the mirror metaphor to explain the reflection of the object on the subject is indeed similar. Lacan believes that the child between 6 months and 2 and a half years old comes to recognize itself via its image in a mirror. At first, they take the image in the mirror to be a real object, and later take it to be the image of someone else. It is only then that they link it to their own body and the subject forms its own basic integrated personality. Hence Lacan states:

> The mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation – and, for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an "orthopedic" form of its totality – and to the finally donned armor of an alienating identity that will mark his entire mental development with its rigid structure. Thus, the shattering of the *Innenwelt* to *Umwelt* circle gives rise to an inexhaustible squaring of the ego's audits.[26]

Post-modern literature further argues that the concept of "I", the subject, is assigned by language and society, in exactly the same manner as the mirror gives the child the image of itself. Animals do not have language and so it is difficult for them to know what they are like. Man always forms his own concept of self through emulation in language and that of others. This bears some similarities with the Chinese "using man as a mirror" and "using the past as a mirror."

"Children are attracted to the brightness of a mirror, and in that brightness they discover themselves." This statement both incorporates overtones of Lacan's "mirror stage," along with overtones of the Chinese "using man as a mirror" and "using the past as a mirror." As to the contention that the fish fossil metaphor further illustrated the fact that all types of norms and patterns that are expressed through language are originally man made, initially [they were/this was] a type of poetic awareness/cognition, but later it "rigidified" and "regularized" man's "self." "Children discover themselves in a mirror" should carry two levels of meaning: on one level it infers that all concepts that belong to the "non-me" "objective" realm are in fact created by man himself; the other level argues that [any] "concept of categories" which is constructed by mankind through language is like a mirror and offers a pattern/mode for the human self, because the formation of the human self cannot be separated from language and the imitation of others. From this, we can see that the self that a child discovers in a mirror is both the self and at the same time, not the self. It includes the self-according to others as well as the self that

[25]Taken from *Taiping yulan* (photo–offset edition) (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju, 1960), p. 3177.

[26]Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Translated by Bruce Fink (New York: Norton & Company, 2006), p. 97.

others believe you should be. Here, what the mirror is comparing is the language and society that has formed and created (by means of imitation/copying/mimicking) the self.

19.4 IV

As we have seen above, although China and the West utilize it in different ways, nevertheless they both metaphorically use the mirror to reflect mankind's own objective world. When we discussed above the fact that the West largely uses the mirror as a metaphor for a work of art and China uses it as a metaphor for the heart/mind of man, then we are only speaking broadly. In fact, China also has occasions where the mirror is used as a metaphor for a work of art and the West also uses the mirror as a metaphor for man's heart/mind, but how they utilize it is invariably totally dissimilar.

Da Vinci also used the mirror as a metaphor for the heart of an artist. But this is completely different to the way China uses it. What he emphasizes is not the emptiness and illusion of the mirror but to the contrary, he emphasizes its ability to reflect complex colors, images, and genres. Chinese poetics also has occasions where a work of art is likened to a mirror and not to the heart/mind of an author, such as Yan Yu's *Canglang Remarks on Poetry*: "Poetry is 'to sing what is in the heart'… tones in the empty air, or color in a face, or moonlight in the water, or an image in a mirror—the words are exhausted, but the meaning is never exhausted." Xie Zhen in his *Four Seas Poetic Discussions* argues: "Some poetry can be understood whilst others cannot. Like the moon reflected on water or flowers in a mirror, do not attempt to make sense of it." Although here a mirror is used to represent a work of art, nevertheless what is emphasized remains "vacancy and illusion." The Ming poetry critic Hu Yinglin 胡应麟 in his *Poetry Marsh* 《诗薮》 states:

> "Like flowers in a mirror or the moon reflected on water, form and tone are like the water and the mirror; appreciation of form and the touching of the emotions are like the moon and the flowers; the water must be pure and the mirror bright, and only then will the flowers and the moon appear bright. How can one try to glimpse either of these objects if the mirror is cloudy or the river muddied?

Hu Yinglin believed that the former must be clear and pure in order to reveal the latter, and although he uses the format of using a mirror to represent a work of art, however what is stressed is clearness, and not the wholeness and trueness to life that Western poets usually stress when they use the mirror metaphor.

If we return to "using a mirror to reflect another mirror" for a minute, we can also observe a completely different usage. For example, the German forerunner to Protestantism, Meister Eckhart (1260–1327), the renowned German poet and playwright, Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863), the great Irish poet and playwright William Butler Yeats (1865–1939), amongst others, have all used the metaphor of "using a mirror to reflect another mirror," but none of them used this example to

explain the profundity of "reason" and "matters/events" in the same way as the Buddhist and Daoist classics did, but rather they used it to explain uncreative imitation. However, most Chinese poets, basing their work on the foundation of the Buddhist and Daoist classics, use "using a mirror to reflect another mirror" to represent a type of complex and intertwined creative concept. In fact, in a *waka* poem describing the moon, the early Kamakura period Japanese Zen master Myōe Shōnin (1173–1232) wrote in the same vein, in which "I" face [my] pure heart towards the bright moon (Mirror A reflects mirror B), where "I" am mirror A and the "moon" is mirror B. In the second line, because "My" frame of mind is clear and still like that of the moon, the moon mistakes "Me" for the moon itself. And as mirror B, the moon spies/embraces "My" (mirror A)'s face which is fronting the moon, such that "I" (mirror A) gain a deeper understanding of how the moon understands me. This is not the repeated emulation that Yeats speaks of, but rather Qian Zhongshu's "mutual layering, where each layer illuminates the other," leading to an even more abstruse misty nothingness.

19.5 V

Why does the West always use the mirror to emphasize a work of literature's trueness to life, completeness, and quick-wittedness, while China invariably uses the mirror to describe the vacancy and illusion, fairness, and honesty and empty quietude of the author's heart? Why is it that even when Western artists use the mirror to represent the mind and soul, and Chinese poets also use the mirror to represent a work of art, what they emphasize is so different—to the extent that when they use the same comparison/metaphor of "using a mirror to reflect another mirror" as a metaphor for a phenomenon in poetics, the aesthetic distance between them remains so great?

This is perhaps due to the difference between the traditional Chinese and Western modes of thought. Generally speaking, the traditional Western mode invariably stresses the binary opposition of the subjective and the objective. The subject is independent of the objective world and moreover, bestows form on it/endows it with form and gives it names. To get to know the world is a process of observation, analysis, dissection, reflection, and summing up of objective targets that are external to the subject. If man wishes to transcend his own self/body, then he can only rely on external forces, like the salvation of God. Therefore, what Western poetics stresses is also how to faithfully, completely, and quick-wittedly reflect this process of knowing and transcending. Meanwhile, China's traditional mode of thinking holds that both the subjective and objective worlds are in the final analysis one body, therefore, it stresses reflections on the self. The way of Heaven ultimately inhabits the heart of man, so if you exhaust the heart of man, and thus come to know the truth/logic of Heaven, then you should not seek to know the world by searching externally, but rather all you need to do is to uncover it from within your heart of hearts. If people want to transcend the mortal and become a

saint, then there is also no necessity to seek help from any external force, but only to comprehend it from within man's innate nature. Therefore, the most important thing is to possess a vacant yet alert, still and clear heart. Nor does Chinese poetics stress the act of observing, listening to, examining and reflecting the world, but rather to "close the eyes and ears, think deeply and research widely." In other words, "close your eyes and ears and think deeply to gain inspiration."

On the other hand, China's ancients often used a type of "reversal" mode when they were practicing thought. For example, to paint the moon, he would not use strokes or colors to paint the moon itself, but rather he would "paint off-setting clouds." In other words, he would paint a number of clouds and in the midst of these clouds he would leave a circular or perhaps semi-circular space. The moon he thus paints is precisely in that spot that he has not painted. This type of methodology is a traditional Chinese style of thinking. In the ancient *Dao De Jing*, Lao Zi offered many examples where he discussed the uses of "nothingness." For example, if we use potter's clay to fashion eating utensils, what is truly of most value is not the pot itself, but the space that the pot forms. What China's traditional poetics also stresses is to achieve the desired effect with a word. In other words, what China's traditional poetics mainly concentrates on is not language itself per se, but all the various layers of void or emptiness that language constructs. Therefore, when it uses a mirror in a metaphorical sense, what China's poetics primarily stresses is a mirror's illusoriness and absence of any object.

Summing up, are we able to say that the different ways that China and the West use the mirror metaphor actually reflect the differences between the different modes of thinking between the two and the difference in stress placed by the poetics of China and the West?

Chapter 20
Lunar Appreciation and Legends Across Different Cultures

Poetry and folklore associated with the moon can be found endlessly throughout all parts of the world. The moon has always been a companion to people at times of joyful elation, as well as a confidante during times of worry or sorrow. Different cultures do however depict the moon in different ways, with different perspectives and styles in their appreciation that are vastly different from each other.

In Chinese culture, the moon is first of all a solitary symbol that transcends time and space. Thousands of years ago, a beautiful young woman drank a legendary magic potion of immortality and felt that her body was light as a feather, drifting all the way up to the moon. There, she remained young and beautiful, accompanied only by a jade hare and Wu Gang. The jade hare is forever engaged in stirring the potion and the young Wu Gang, full of strength and vitality, chops wood, which grows back every time it is chopped, unending, year after year. Ultimately, time fades into eternity without further development, and time-space becomes static, without any further change. Yet this young woman, Chang E, remained unhappy. She was incredibly lonely, just as the lines in one particular poem states: "Chang E must regret having stolen the miraculous potion as she broods over the sapphire sea and azure sky, night after night."

In Chinese poetry, the moon has always been depicted as a symbol of eternity and solitude, and contrasted with worldly troubles and the transience of life itself. In the particularly renowned poem "Addressing the Moon with a Glass of Wine", Li Bai writes,

> The white hare stirs the potion from fall to spring, and Chang E resides in solitude, who is her neighbour?
> People of today cannot see the moon of old, yet today's moon once shone upon the ancients.
> The ancients and today's people are like running water, all gazing at the luminescent moon!
> I only wish that when we sing and toast each other, that the moonbeams will continue to illuminate our golden goblets.

A person of today can never see the moon of ancient times, and in comparison to the universe, a person's lifetime is merely an insignificant, fleeting moment, yet, because of the moon's permanency, it is able to light the way of people in both the

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past, present and the future. Over the millennia, humans have remained completely powerless against the paradox that "human life is transient and the universe is eternal". However, when we read Li Bai's poetry, we are reminded that in a different time to our own, Li Bai lived under the same moon as ourselves, just as Li Bai, as he wrote his poetry, would be reminded of earlier predecessors who similarly gazed at the same moon. It is precisely this inerasable shared distress and frustration, that, through this eternal mediator, the moon, connects the "ancients" who "could not see before their time" and the "men of the future" who "will not be able to see what will follow them", allowing them to transcend time, resonating and engaging with one another and thus achieving a modicum of permanency. Throughout his lifetime, Li Bai associated his quest for eternity with the moon. In another of his poems, 'Drinking in solitude beneath the moon', he writes, "Among the flowers from a pot of wine, I drink alone, without a companion. I raise my cup to the moon, and with her and my shadow, we are three friends." In the depth of night, and in absolute solitude, he is accompanied only by the eternal moon and his own shadow. Although the three have enjoyed a happy tryst, it is only for a brief period: "I sing to entreat the moon to linger, while I and my shadow dance drunkenly. Sober, we three remain cheerful and gay; drunken, we part and each goes his separate way." What Li Bai sought was an eternal transcendence of worldly emotion/sentiment and a union with his most beloved moon, high above the Milky Way Galaxy, and as the ending of this poem reads, "our friendship will outshine all earthly love; Next time we'll meet beyond the stars above". Legend has it that Li Bai died trying to "scoop-up the moon from the Yangtze River". He drunkenly leapt into the river in an attempt to embrace the moon. He thus sacrificed his life for the moon, and returned to the bosom of the eternal.

Japanese literature also contains a substantial body of writing which depicts the moon—although it seems that the Japanese rarely view the moon as a symbol of transcendence or the eternal. Rather, they are more inclined to view the moon as an equal, an intimate companion, and at times even placing it under one's own protection, treating it with great fondness and affection. As the thirteenth century Zen master Dogen (1200–1253), for instance, once wrote: "the winter moon stirs the clouds and they follow, further pitying the wind and snow as they steep the body of the moon". The romantically named "poet of the moon", Myōe Shōnin (1173–1232), wrote many poems regarding the moon, and the *waka* poem "Keeping Company with the Winter Moon" with a long preface especially illustrates this point. The Preface puts it this way:

> On the night of the twelfth day of the twelfth month of the year 1224, the moon was behind clouds. I sat in Zen meditation in the Kakyu Hall. When the hour of the midnight vigil came, I ceased meditation and descended from the hall on the peak to the lower quarters, and as I did so the moon came from the clouds and set the snow to glowing. The moon was my companion, and not even the wolf howling in the valley brought fear. When, presently, I came out of the lower quarters again, the moon was again behind clouds. As the bell was signalling the late-night vigil, I made my way once more to the peak, and the moon saw me

> on the way. I entered the meditation hall, and the moon, chasing the clouds, was about to sink behind the peak beyond, and it seemed to me that it was keeping me secret company.[1]

On this occasion, he wrote two lines of poets: "I shall go behind the mountain. Go there too, O moon. Night after night we shall keep each other company." Which he followed up with the statement:

> Opening my eyes from my meditations, I saw the moon in the dawn, lighting the window. In a dark place myself, I felt as if my own heart were glowing with light which seemed to be that of the moon.

Finally, he penned two sentences that hold universal appeal: "My heart shines; a pure expanse of light; and no doubt the moon will think the light its own."

The renowned Japanese writer Yasunari Kawabata in his speech accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature quoted this poem and added by way of explanation: "The thirty-one syllables of each poem, honest and straightforward as if he were addressing the moon, are not merely to 'the moon as my companion'. Seeing the moon, he becomes the moon; the moon seen by him becomes him. He sinks into nature, becomes one with nature. The light of the 'clear heart' of the priest, seated in the meditation hall in the darkness before the dawn, becomes for the dawn moon its own light."[2]

Kawabata goes on to point out that this *waka* poem was intonedas a result of the subtle mutual echoing and interweaving of Myōe's heart, which was contemplating religion and philosophy, and the moon, after having entered the Zen temple on the mountain. It was a kind of warm, profound and meticulous eulogy to the world of man, a celebration of "the natural world", as well as the precious and benevolent innermost being of the Japanese people.

Myōe's poem and Kawabata's analysis offer us a perspective and artistic conception of lunar appreciation which is completely different to that of Li Bai.

The moon goddess Selene in Greek mythology is another beautiful goddess. She has wings and wears a golden crown and daily rides a gleaming moon chariot, pulled by a pair of white horses. She darts across the sky and finally disappears in the river Oceanus. Under the pen of the female Greek poet Sappho, Selene is a beautiful maiden who grasps a torch in her hand and is pursued by a host of stars. The moon goddess falls in love with the youthful Endymion who is a short-lived mortal, but because of Selene's love for him, the gods bestow eternal youth on him, on the condition that he remains sleeping and does not wake. Selene rode her chariot daily across the heavens, and when she got to the cave where her lover was sleeping, she kissed the beautiful somnolent youth. Legend has it that because of this hopeless love, the moon goddess' face turned ashen. In this legend, the beautiful Endymion attains immortality, but the price he pays is his loss of

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[1]Quote taken from translation of Yasunari Kawabata's Nobel Lecture, December 12, 1968. Available at http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1968/kawabata–lecture.html [viewed 7 June, 2015].

[2]Ibid.

consciousness and separation from the world of men, just like Chang E. Mankind has long wished to cast aside time and seek immortality, the result of which is invariably tragic. And even if they were to succeed, the immortality that they achieve is not happy, but instead turns into something alien, like eternal solitude. The story of Sai Lenie and Chang E illustrates this point.

The Greek moon goddess, like the other gods of Greek mythology, is all capable of love and hate, jealousy and enmity, emotionally experiencing a worldly life which is similar to that of mortals. And Western poetry which describes the moon is invariably suffused with an even stronger human flavor. Below is the poem "Tristesses de la lune [Sadness of the Moon]" by the French poet Charles Baudelaire:

> More drowsy dreams the moon tonight. She rests
> Like a proud beauty on heaped cushions pressing,
> With light and absent-minded touch caressing,
> Before she sleeps, the contour of her breasts.
>
> On satin-shimmering, downy avalanches
> She dies from swoon to swoon in languid change,
> And lets her eyes on snowy visions range
> That in the azure rise like flowering branches.
>
> When sometimes to this earth her languor calm
> Lets streak a stealthy tear, a pious poet,
> The enemy of sleep, in his cupped palm,
> Takes this pale tear, of liquid opal spun
> With rainbow lights, deep in his heart to stow it
> Far from the staring eyeballs of the Sun.[3]

Describing the moon in this manner is rather profane to the eyes of an Easterner. Baudelaire's moon is not rich in metaphysical overtones like that of Li Bai. Nor is it a total amalgam of man and nature like the moon of Zen Master Myōe. Under Baudelaire's pen, the moon is an independent object which sheds its pale tears on the earth, flowing into the very heart of the poet. The poet, engrossed in imagination and contemplation beneath the moon, is also a solitary subject. In another poem, "The Gifts of the Moon", the poet imagines that the moon has descended to his side:

> [The moon] softly descended her stairway of clouds and passed through the window-pane without noise. She bent over you with the supple tenderness of a mother and laid her colors upon your face.[4]

In this poem, the moon is a solitary object and at the same time is a living subject of the poem. No matter how intimate the relationship between man and nature is, it is always a binary relationship of two independent objects. Perhaps this illustrates

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[3]Translation from Roy Campbell, *Poems of Baudelaire* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952).

[4]From *The Poems and Prose Poems of Charles Baudelaire with an Introductory Preface by James Huneker* (New York: Brentano's Publishers, 1919). Available at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/36287/36287–h/36287–h.htm#THE_GIFTS_OF_THE_MOON [accessed 9/6/2015].

the difference between the Eastern unity-of-man-and-Heaven mode of thinking and the Western binary opposite mode.

In conclusion, three poets from different eras and different cultures use different methodologies to admire and describe the moon and at the same time provide us with exquisite artistic experiences. If we were able to use only one method to appreciate the moon, what a huge loss that would be to us. No matter which method we were to exclude, it would impoverish our overall artistic pleasure in appreciating the moon. My intention is to use the example of the different methods of appreciation of the moon exhibited by different people from different cultures to illustrate how different cultures are able, via a type of "mediation" or "agency" to achieve mutual understanding and recognition. The moon in poetry and tradition is just such an "agent". It can enable the citizens of different cultures to appreciate and even embrace a different culture and to offer an artistic pleasure that has heretofore been unattainable within one's own culture.

Chapter 21
Looking at Yangtze River Culture Through the Legend of the Goddess of Mount Wu

The ancient legend of the Goddess of Mt Wu is one of China's most beautiful and profound morality legends. Song Yu in his "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine" and "*Fu* on the goddess" addressed this subject vividly and colorfully. The preface to "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine" describes how one day King Xiang of Chu was "walking with Sung Yü on the Cloud-Dream Terrace, he looked up at the Kao T'ang Shrine".[1] Yunmeng is on the banks of modern-day Jianghan in Hubei Province and has a long history. It was an ancient hunting ground for the kings of Chu. Yunmeng was the center of the *Daozuo* culture in the central reaches of the Yangtze River. Sima Xiangru in his "Zixu *Fu*" 《子虚赋》 further described that there was a mountain, the slopes of which were covered in luxuriant vegetation and crowned by an azure sky. Creeks criss-cross at the foot of the mountain and beyond is the domain of the Yangtze. "Its soil is as if painted with ochre, skirted in yellow and white"; "its crags are scarlet jade roses." "To the east is an expanse of wildflowers and to the south is plain and broad marshlands. To the west are gushing springs and clear ponds which conceal huge boulders and white sands. To the north there are dark forests with giant trees suffused with the fragrance of tangerines and pomelos. Above fly rare birds, whilst below prowl white tigers and black panthers…" It is indeed a natural paradise!

Within a radius of 900 leagues of Yunmeng, there are pavilions and studios, towers and terraces. The "terraces of Yunmeng" that King Xiang of Chu and Song Yu visited were one of these. From here you can glimpse "the Gaotang shrine" in the distance. This Gaotang Terrace was built deep among the clouds and viewing it from a distance, all that can be seen are the loops of cloud and the coils of mist. The mists and cloud now resembled mountain peaks towering layer upon layer, and then the clouds and mist would dissipate in an ever-changing parade.

[1] "The Kao T'ang Fu by Sung Yü" in Arthur Waley (trans.), *The Temple and Other Poems* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1923), p. 65.

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("*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine": Pointing steadily skywards like a pinnacle of rock.[2]) This place is certainly at some highly elevated spot. Chen Zi'ang[3] has a poem which reads: You can even see Yunyang which is part of Sichuan's Bajun mountain cluster from Gaotang Terrace, so it is obvious how elevated it was! This Yunmeng terrace, this shimmering Gaotang on Mount Wu moved Prince Huai of Chu deeply, so much so that he had a daydream, and the main character in that dream was the beautiful Mount Wu goddess, Yaoji.

Yaoji was the young daughter of the scarlet emperor 赤帝.[4] She was unmarried and died young. She was buried on the Northern slopes of Mount Wu, and thus was referred to as the maiden of Mount Wu. Her soul was transformed into precious grass 瑶草 which people were powerless not to adore.

Yaoji voluntarily entered Prince Huai of Chu's dream and there followed a night of joy and passion. Just as they were about to part, she told Prince Huai: "My home is on the southern side of the Witches' Hill, where from its rounded summit a sudden chasm falls. At dawn I am the Morning Cloud; at dusk, the Driving Rain. So dawn by dawn and dusk by dusk I dwell beneath the southern crest." In order to memorialize this chance tryst, to remember it morning and night, and the ever-changing goddess of Mount Wu, Prince Huai of Chu built a temple on Mount Wu which the goddess often frequented, and named it "Reaching for the Clouds".

The twelve peaks of Mount Wu are along the banks of the Yangtze River in the mid-section of the Three Gorges section at a place called Wuxia. The Three Gorges is 204 km long, and the water is quite constricted, measuring about 100 m at its most narrow point. The section from Baidicheng in Sichuan to Daixi is called the Qutang Gorge. The original meaning of *dai* was a deep blue-black color, and Daiji got its name from the color of its water and the hues of its mountains being so gloomy and of a deep jade color. The twelve peaks of Mount Wu rise range upon range along the sides of Wu Gorge, the peaks carrying on forever, and the tallest and most beautiful of them all, itself a bluish-green, towering slender and elegant, is the Goddess Peak. Many poets throughout history have sung the praises of Mount Wu. As Song Yu describes it in "*Fu* on the Gaotang shrine": "Still is she and somber as a forest of tall pines, where tree stands close to tree; but soon she kindles with a shimmering light; as when a beautiful lady, looking for her lover, raises lawn sleeves to shade her eyes from the sun. Suddenly her being is transformed; swiftly now she races as a chariot whirled onward by galloping steeds, with feathery flags outspread. From the rain a dankness she borrows, and from the wind an icy breath. But soon the wind has dropped, the rain has cleared, and Morning Cloud has vanished from the sky."[5] It can honestly be described as [a scene of] boundless change!

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[2]Waley op. cit. p. 65.

[3]Lived c. 661–702, a Tang Dynasty poet.

[4]Chidi (赤帝) or Yandi (炎帝) is a legendary pre–dynastic ruler in China's Shaanxi area.

[5]Waley op. cit. p. 66.

In such a context, the goddess of Gaotang would naturally evoke endless reveries about herself. This beautiful young woman who wanders alone amongst the towering and rugged peaks of the Mount Wu range, at times morphing into joyful dawn clouds, and at others taking on the garb of dreary evening rain, and then again transforming into the enchanting precious grass. All-in-all, the goddess of Mount Wu was traditionally identified with the wind, clouds, thunder and lightning in nature, took many forms, and from dusk to dawn, epitomized the specter of eternal longing and solitary fantasy.

The legends about this spectre cannot but remind people of Qu Yuan's "mountain spirits". No matter whether it is mountain spirits or goddesses, they are all beautiful and courageous, independent spirits who live their lives according to their own wills. They were the first to display the rich color and pageant of feminine beauty. In *Limited Views*, Qian Zhongshu makes a simple comparison between the descriptions of feminine beauty in the *Book of Poetry* and the *Songs of Chu*. He argues: "The beauties in the courts of Wei, Yong and Qi are like painted portraits, untouched even by cinnabar", and "The *Songs of Chu* begin with the externals of snowy white skin and jade flesh and then open up to peach-colored cheeks and cherry lips, each basking in the other's glow… their coloration setting them off and giving them an added lustre".[6] Just as "*Fu* on the goddess" describes: "She began to draw near, brilliant, oh! Like the white sun, when he begins to send out rays to the (roof's) beams. By little she came near. Glimmering like the radiant moon, when she emanates her splendor",[7] "Her appearance was full and plump, with earnest-looking beauty, (like the) jade's aspect of luxurious warmth and unctuousness. Her eye-balls radiated forth her nature's light; in their brightness much beauty then might be seen. The eye-brows were connected and delicate, like silkworms rising; the brightness of her red lips might be like cinnabar."[8] Indeed, "She was blooming, she was beautiful! All her beauty was perfect. Well-built (she was and) elegant; (it is) difficult to find out (such a one). From the highest antiquity there was none. She was what the world had not yet seen. A splendid beauty, a costly form, nothing could surpass her light".[9]

The image of the mountain spirits and the goddesses comprehensively revealed for the first time how women freely yearn for love and how they freely apply themselves to their own cherished vision for the future, according to their own will and without any utilitarian motivation or any limitations of the traditional Confucian code of ethics whatsoever. There is a long history in Chinese poetry of describing a woman who is waiting for and anticipating her lover. *Spring and Autumn of Master Lü* contains the report of when the Great Yu "made a tour of inspection of the southern territories", "a maiden from Mount Tu" dispatched

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[6]Qian Zhongshu, *Guanzhui pian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), vol. 1, p. 93.

[7]"Shen–Nü–Fu The Song of the Goddess by Sung Yüh, edited, Translated and Annotated by Ed. Erkes", *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 25, No. 5 (1928), p. 390.

[8]Ibid., p. 392.

[9]Ibid.

someone to accompany Yu to the northern slope of Mt Tu, and composed songs. Later, four chapters entitled *The Retainer* 《候人》 were included in the *Book of Poetry: The Airs of Cao* 《诗经·曹风》. They read: "South Mount, East Slope, you scarce can see thru the mist when the dawn's half alight. / Pleasant, yes, ready, yes, the youngest girl has an appetite",[10] and "That cormorant on the dam, he does not wet his beak; that gentleman there, he will not continue to stand in favor"[11] amongst others. According to Wen Yiduo's meticulous research in "Analysis of the Legend of the Gaotang Goddess", "zhaoji" is in fact the "zhaoyun" referred to in "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine". Both are incarnations of a young woman and the "hungry" in the poem refers to sexual desire. It talks about a young woman's carnal desires that are yet to be reciprocated by her lover. The goddess of Mount Wu's sudden appearance before Prince Huai of Chu, offering to sleep with him, or the "mountain spirits" waiting the whole night in the "driving rain" and "howling wind" are both an extension of this tradition.

But this raises a question: how is it that in "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine", the goddess is happy to have a relationship with Prince Huai, but in "*Fu* on the goddess" King Xiang of Chu meets with rejection, "his advances were not reciprocated and she prepared to depart"? Professor Ye Shuxian explains it this way: it is because "the libidinous goddess that Song Yu created in '*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine' had already disappeared by the time that '*Fu* on the goddess' was written". He believes that when Song Yu wrote "*Fu* on the goddess", "Social ethics had adopted Song Yu's 'superior self' and suppressed the desires of the 'base self' (which were the hallmarks of the spirit of love-making) and the goddess is also transformed into a chaste belle who remains as chaste as a piece of jade. From the fact that the major part of '*Fu* on the goddess' is taken up with fashioning the beauty of the heroine, it is obvious that the goddess has already been transformed from a libidinous goddess to one of beauty".[12] I believe that Professor Ye's analysis has great merit, however there must be a caveat, namely that Song Yu and King Xiang of Chu must have travelled to Yunmeng together on two occasions and that there must have been a considerable amount of time lapse between these two occasions for Song Yu's thinking to undergo such a significant transformation. King Xiang of Chu reigned for 35 years (298–263 BCE), while Song Yu's birth and death dates are no longer verifiable, so it is difficult to determine just how much time lapsed between the writing of the two pieces. Looking at the two pieces themselves, the opening line of "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine" is: "Once when Hsiang, King of Ch'u was walking with Sung Yü on the Cloud-Dream Terrace, he looked up at the Kao T'ang Shrine."[13] Looking at Mount Wu's Gaotang in the distance,

[10]Ezra Pound (trans.), *The Classic Anthology Defined by Confucius* (London, Faber and Faber, 1955). Vol. 1, p. 73.

[11]Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiqities, 1950), p. 94.

[12]Ye Shuxian, *Gaotang shennu yu Weinasi* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1997), p. 320.

[13]"The Kao T'ang Fu by Sung Yü" in Arthur Waley (trans.), *The Temple and Other poems*, p. 65.

Song Yu and King Xiang discuss the tryst between the former king and the goddess on the Gaotang Terrace, with the emphasis on the unpredictability of the beautiful scenery of Mount Wu. The first sentence of "*Fu* on the goddess", on the other hand, is "King Siang of Ch'u rambled together with Sung Yühon the shore of Yün-meng. He ordered Yüh to write a poem on the things of Kao-t'ang",[14] but the whole piece fails to "eulogize the Gaotang matter". On the contrary, through the medium of King Xiang's dream, the beauty of the goddess in the dream is afforded great prominence. Might we not assume that King Xiang of Chu and Song Yu were first on an elevated terrace looking out, and later they were resting on the riverbank? It is extremely possible that the "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine" that we know now was, in fact, a result of King Xiang's instruction to Song Yu to "write a *Fu* on the matter at Gaotang". And precisely because he had only just spied Mount Wu and chatted about goddesses, a goddess might just have entered into King Xiang's dream.

If we look at the two together, a relatively more plausible reading would be: Song Yu and King Xiang were visiting the Yunmeng terrace and in the distance they spy the beautiful Mount Wu. They chat about the anecdote of the former king and the goddess of Mount Wu and this triggers a bout of unbridled fancy on behalf of King Xiang, upon which that night he dreams of the goddess. But he does not have the same fortune as the former king. It seems that the goddess does not care so much for him and she is initially hesitant, "Her intention was like going near and then fleeing afar; (she was) like wanting to come and turn round again",[15] after which she "kept down [her] indignation, thereby controlling herself; like formerly she could not transgress"[16] until she finally "shook [her] girdle-ornaments, made her jade she-phoenix resound, readjusted her dress, collected her face"[17] and "without reciprocating [his] advances, made ready to depart". No matter how much King Xiang was "Disappointed and vexed [that he] shed tears; [he] sought for her till sunrise",[18] it is all to no avail. So we can see that what "*Fu* on the goddess" emphasizes is not necessarily what Professor Ye claims, in other words, the repression of the "base self" by the "superior self". On the contrary, we are unable to note any repression or constraint in the image of the goddess, but in fact what is portrayed is a living independent woman who appears out of nowhere and disappears without a trace, who is temperamental and headstrong, and who comes and goes as she pleases. If she were truly a "decorous" individual whose "superior self" had suppressed her "base self", then how could she enter King Xiang's dream so casually and how could she not respect this king? All-in-all, the attitude of the Chinese people in the ancient past towards sex, and especially women, was a far cry from being suppressed and artificial, or even of having their normal and natural sexual urges tramped down into some subconscious abyss, never to see the light of

[14]Erkes op. cit. pp. 388–9.
[15]Ibid., p. 392.
[16]Ibid., p. 393.
[17]Ibid.
[18]Ibid., p. 394.

day. This type of traditional open-minded spirit had always been preserved in the Yangtze culture, and in fact has been kept alive by the ethnic minorities on the southern peripheries of our nation.

In conclusion to the above discussion, what "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine" and "*Fu* on the goddess" have displayed to us is a rich and varied natural environment full of color and movement, a dreamlike fantasy, an elegant and mystical flight of fancy, a bold and unrestrained emotional statement of a deep love of freedom and of life itself. These are defining characteristics of the Yangtze culture. But how were these characteristics formed, pray tell?

This naturally is first of all related to the complex and ever changing topography of the Yangtze valley, its abundant rainfall, a climate that is pleasant, extremely rich and varied flora and a virulent natural ecological environment. From another angle, this has had a major bearing on the origins of the Yangtze culture. "Mountain Spirits", "*Fu* on the Gaotang Shrine" and "*Fu* on the goddess" and other songs of Chu were largely conceived and produced in the middle reaches of the Yangtze river—in other words, in the region of the ancient state of Chu which today includes the area of Sichuan, Hubei, and Hunan. The ancestors of Chu probably migrated from the central plains towards the south of the Han River during the early years of the Zhou Dynasty and later settled in the Yangtze River valley. The traditional culture of the Chu nobility was not part of the Zhou culture, but rather were direct inheritors of the Xia-Shang culture.

The original inhabitants of the Yangtze valley at the time such as the Sanmiao, Puren and Baren, all believed in shamans and ghosts and were passionate about music and dance. A song of the common people of the Ba ethnicity in fact became the "pop song" of the thousands of inhabitants of the Chu capital! It can be seen just how popular were the songs and dances that necessarily accompanied ceremonies of sacrifice to the gods and of amusing the spirits! This music and dance, along with all sorts of mystical and imaginative ceremonies for communion with the spirits offered a broad canvas for the exercise of human imagination.

Additionally, this may have some connection to the planting of rice which is the principal agricultural context of the Yangtze valley. The Japanese scholar Professor Umehara Takeshi who is an expert on the rice culture of the Yangtze valley believes that rice cultivation requires water and continual rain through spring and summer. Rain is a natural phenomenon and cannot be controlled by mankind. Moreover, the reason why the river, which provides the water, is able to continue providing it is because of a natural reservoir—the lush forests—and the ordinary people who engage in rice cultivation deeply understand this principle. Therefore, those who cultivate rice understand all too well the logic that without forests there would be no rice cultivation, and thus they cherish the forests. This no doubt is one of the sources of the Yangtze culture's respect for nature and being at one with nature.

Chapter 22
The Stone as a Motif in Narration of *A Dream of Red Mansions*

Rock or stone is the antithesis of water. It is the symbol of steadfastness. There are many references to rocks or stones in Chinese historical documents. The conceptualization used in *A Dream of Red Mansions* is evidently related to these recordings. However, changes in a stone are normally not seen as a lucky omen but rather presage general earthly chaos or the betrayal of a relative, and it especially symbolizes "the end of the line" and the absence of a successor. Additionally, the ancients believed that rock itself is earth and that it is also the generator of clouds. In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu's karma relationship in their previous existence, Jia Baoyu and Xue Baochai's marriage, or Jia Baoyu and Shi Xiangyun's mutual lust, all illustrate the extremely complex symbolic meaning of the stone in *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

In fact, eight of the 12 editions in the *Zhiping*[1] series of the work have been called *The Story of the Stone*, and this demonstrates the important position of stones in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. So, what is the relationship between the story of the mischievous stone in *A Dream of Red Mansions* with that of the principle narrative, and what role does the stone play in the narrative?

A Dream of Red Mansions has a main narrative of describing the existing world, along with a narrative of a mischievous/naughty stone migrating from the world of fantasy to the real world. *A Dream of Red Mansions* begins with the story of the mischievous stone: there is a giant stone sitting below the Qinggeng Peak of Dahuang Mountain which was forged by Nüwa,[2] but because it was unable to repair heaven, it was banished to the earth in an ethereal form. From the *Zhiping* commentary it can be seen that the conclusion to the original work should have been: the story opens with the stone, and also closes with the stone.

[1] *Zhiping* refers to a commentary on the *Dream of Red Mansions* that is generally accepted as the earliest commentary on the work.

[2] Nüwa, also known as Nügua, is a goddess in ancient Chinese mythology credited with creating mankind and repairing the pillar of heaven.

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Then, how is this story of the mischievous stone linked to the main narrative of the story? This is achieved in two ways: in the *Zhiping* commentary, the stone changes into a piece of jade and is brought by Shenying shizhe when he enters the world of men. On page 84 of the *Jiaxu* dition[3] of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, when Baochai spies Baoyu's jade, the author writes: this is the illusion of the stone under Qinggeng peak. The mischievous stone morphs into jade and then eventually morphs back into its mischievous self. In this linking, the stone itself is not the main character; it is not an "actor", but rather an observer and witness to the tragedies and triumphs depicted in the main narrative.

In the *Chengke* edition 程刻本, the circumstances are different: the mischievous stone pays a visit to the Chixia Palace, changes into Shengying shizhe, and is then born again and changes into Jia Baoyu; a sentient being changes into a spirit and that spirit then changes into a man. The mischievous stone is not a bystander, but a protagonist, and the experiences of the mischievous stone are at the same time Jia Baoyu's experiences.

It seems that the first method of linking is closer to the author's original intention. First of all, the story of the mischievous stone permeates the entire situation, and is not restricted to merely the beginning or the conclusion. Secondly, as the *Zhiping* says: Brother Stone is the thread linking all the stories on emotions. For some sub-plots that are not related at all to Jia Baoyu himself, like the story of the You sisters or Yuanyang's refusal to marry, the author does his best to allow Jia Baoyu, who wears the "illusory mischievous stone", to be present. Thirdly, according to the calculations of the *Zhiping* commentary, the second half of the original text was devoted largely to the matter of Zhen clan. What is more, this piece of jade was stolen, only later to be found by Wang Xifeng. Finally it was returned by Zhen Baoyu. In fact it was the act of this piece of precious jade witnessing the lives of the two great houses of Zhen and Jia in the south and north that became pivotal to the twist in the plot.

The criss-cross linking of the story of the mischievous stone and the main plot, or the real world with the fantasy world renders the narrative methodology of *A Dream of Red Mansions* extremely complex. Here we have an omniscient narrator who is fully cognizant of cause and effect, the past and the future, and knows intimately the Qinggeng peak, Chixia palace and Land of the Grand Illusion of the legendary world. He also understands all the ins and outs of the Zhen and Jia mansions. And apart from himself, there is another even more immediate narrator, namely, the stone. At times he uses the point of view adopted by the author and appears directly, narrating in the first person. The stone sometimes adopts the perspective of the author to record all that it personally sees and hears (for example, Chap. 6 of the *Jiaxu* edition). This narrator (the stone) is neither the main protagonist of the story like in many novels narrated in the first person, nor is it completely external to the story as is true of many novels written in the third person.

[3]The *jiaxu* year corresponds to the year 1754. This edition is thought to most closely follow Cao Xueqin's original text.

It clings tightly to the main characters (Jia Baoyu and Zhen Baoyu), and is both their symbol and their incarnation. It uses their ideological perspective to observe everything and is instrumental in linking them up with their pre-existence and their hereafter which they themselves fail to comprehend.

The complex nature of this extremely special type of narration renders the architecture of *A Dream of Red Mansions* like a polytope. Owing to the refraction of many different layers of light, people extract different meanings from the main topic of the work. Over many years, some have said that the main subject of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is the narration of the politics of the Qing court. Others argue that it concerns itself with the Buddhist idea of emptiness. Still others say that it is an autobiography of the author, a love tragedy, "an account of the four great clans", or class struggle… Opinions differ on these interpretations, and all have their own logic, but none are completely balanced. If we begin our enquiry from the link between the story of the mischievous stone and that of the main theme, the mischievous stone will not accept the lonesomeness in the wild mountain but instead craves the rich and colourful human world and so morphs and enters the world, enjoys to the full the riches and honor, glory and splendor of the mortal life along with experiencing the full gamut of separation and union, sorrow and joy of the common people, only to realize that although it is desolate and lonely beneath the Qinggeng Peak of Mount Huang, nevertheless it is carefree. It is without care or worry, and although the human world has many delights and pleasures, nevertheless, it is subject to constant change and hardship follows joy. The mischievous stone entered the world of men in vain and felt it better that he return whence he came. The mischievous stone's entry and exit from the world of men illustrates a type of attitude and impression of the author with respect to the life of men, and the many tragedies that the main plot explores reflects the yearning for freedom and happiness by the whole lower stratum of society and the cruel oppression of the innocent along with their/his own irrevocable decline and collapse. Starting from this main subject, if we observe the structure of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, then we will discover that it is precisely the stone that links the otherworldly land of illusion and the present real world and it forms the turning point of the development of the entire plot.

Chapter 23
Revenge and Memory

Revenge is a type of memory, and if it is sustained through to posterity, it will shape the future. If we continue to cling to revenge, no matter whether it is modern day Palestine or Afghanistan, how can enmity ever be dissolved? I fear that this is the greatest challenge faced by mankind in the modern day. Chinese culture has a tradition of revenge. Take for example the story of Meijian chi 眉间尺 and a pair of male and female swords 雌雄剑. Lu Xun's *Old Tales Retold: Forging the Swords* is an adaptation of this story. The original work appeared in *Legends of Strange Gods* (traditionally accredited to Cao Pi[1]) and Gao Bao's *Stories of Immortals*. The story describes how the renowned smith Gan Jiang and his wife Moxie forged a pair of swords. The King of Chu received the female sword, and in order to ensure that the matchless craft of the artisans could not be utilized by anyone else in the future, he had Gan Jiang killed. Gan Jiang had buried the male sword in the lee of the Southern Mountains, in anticipation of his son avenging him when his son had grown up. Some 16 years later, his son Meijianchi realized his destined duty. In fact, he had never seen his father, but his whole life was dedicated to the necessity of avenging his father, eventually sacrificing his own life. But how could a 16 year old child be afforded the chance to meet a king? It so happened that he was assisted by a person wearing black clothing on the proviso that he would use the child's head and the male sword as a lure and tricks the King of Chu into offering him his trust. Meijianchi heroically takes his own life and his head accompanies the black-clothed stranger into the imperial palace in a giant golden cauldron,[2] which was boiling in the manner of the "reunion dance." The black-clothed stranger took advantage of the King of Chu's approach to have a closer look and sliced off the King's head, allowing it to join Meijianchi's head in the cauldron. Meijianchi's head tore at the King's head in the cauldron, but it was not victorious. So the black-clothed stranger came to Meijianchi's aid by cutting off his own head and plunging it into the cauldron as well. Finally all three heads were bobbing about in

[1]Cao Pi (187–226), second son of Cao Cao.
[2]*Ding* (鼎) is an ancient cooking cauldron with two looped handles and three or four legs.

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the huge cauldron and they eventually all turned into white skulls. It was impossible to tell which skull was that of the King and which was the skull of the avenger. And if it was impossible to tell them apart, how they could be buried according to their station, so they all became "Kings" and were called the "House of the Three Kings"—it was impossible to distinguish the avengers from those on whom revenge was being meted out, so they melded into one. What is the value in comparing short-term revenge and permanent death, or the extremely important value of the secular world and the extinction of life? I feel that there is a profound meaning to this story that Lu Xun has told and it is full of irony and symbolism. The story of *Romeo and Juliet* is similar; harboring clan-based revenge destroys beautiful lives and real love.

Throughout the ages, both at home and abroad, many works of literature have stubbornly clung to the topic of revenge. Jin Yong (Louis Cha)'s martial arts novels in his later years reflected on this topic regularly—to the extent that they raise the fact that revenge is not sought at times but that it was impossible to avoid (for example, the movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*). However, "if you hate, then you must hate consummately." But what is this notion of "consummately"? Zhang Zai says in the first volume of *Zheng mengzhu*, "any enmity will eventually be solved." There are also such popular sayings as "For all the disasters the brotherhood has remained. A smile at meeting and enmity is banished". Feng Youlan argued in *The History of Modern Chinese Philosophy* that [the notion that] "any enmity will eventually be solved" is the current direction of historical development and that mankind should no longer take the road of "if you hate, then you must hate consummately." In other words, we should not harbor hatred for ever, exacting revenge constantly, but rather we need to seek a means of resolution. In resolving the relationships of mankind today, the question of revenge is very important, but it is also complex, and invariably we can neither continue to hate and kill forever, nor can we achieve genuine reconciliation.

What is important is that in discussing revenge, we need to distinguish between the types of revenge. There is just revenge, revenge that is not necessarily just (i.e., personal grudges), and public revenge for private wrongs, etc. Thus, when someone asked Confucius: "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" The Master said: "Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness." And what does recompense injury with justice mean? In *True Meaning of the Confucian Analects,* the author distinguishes between three different circumstances. The first is: if you brood over things and are unable to put them out of your mind, then you should exact impartial and honest revenge and then immediately put it out of your mind. The second circumstance is: if you are really able to put aside your resentment and not seek revenge, and not consciously bury it even further, then this is "genuine." The third circumstance refers to: if you are not able to put aside your resentment, but are able to assuage your heart with logic and no longer harbor resentment, then this is also "genuine." To sum up, the principle is to use legitimate methods to remove the accumulated resentment from one's heart and allow "virtue" to fill the heart.

From this we can see that, on the question of "revenge and memory," what Chinese culture emphasizes is the pursuit of a harmonious and tranquil state of mind, and if retribution is to be exacted, then the objective remains to achieve a tranquility in mind, and not "if you hate, then you must hate consummately." Thus there are no lessons like "if you forget the past then that amounts to betrayal," but rather advocacy for seeking a way to eliminate or to put to one side certain negative feelings of resentment and to allow the spirit to be filled with "virtue" and "harmony".

Part IV
Theorizing Comparative Literature

Chapter 24
The International and National Nature of Comparative Literature

During the second half of the twentieth century, the discipline of comparative literature witnessed a huge expansion. Since the 1980s, a considerable number of perceptive experts in the field have been striving to break through the West-centric and colonialist ideology. Especially from the aspect of the Asian-African-Latin American Third World point of view, following the advent of the postcolonial era and the wide-ranging influence of post-structuralist theory, the comparative literature discipline is currently exhibiting an unprecedented vigor and vitality, which presages an even greater expansion in the future. The demise of West-centrism heralded the booming of multiculturalism and offered new possibilities for the development of comparative literature. And as postcolonialism took deep root in people's hearts, it spurred all ethnicities to strive to return to their roots, comprehensively unearth their own cultural uniqueness and hugely enrich and expose their own ethnic characteristics. At the same time, the world entered the information age, the age of high-speed information networks, email, etc., which meant that rapid intercultural transmission became a reality and all of the people and regions of all cultures in the world were able to access the same news at the same time, meaning that any self-imposed isolation, any stubborn defense of one's own territory, or any attempt to evade interaction could be denied success. All of this meant that comparative literature could no longer be confined to within a like-minded Western cultural domain, but rather it offered an unprecedentedly broad scope for comparison and mutual coexistence between the different cultures of Euro-America, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Currently, the first thing we sense is the decolonialization of literature and comparative literature. If we look back over the twentieth century, we can see that it reflects in a concentrated form the catastrophe and harm wreaked by the colonial and autocratic system which had been built up over the previous several centuries: two World Wars, the Jewish holocaust, the Soviet gulags, China's Cultural

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Revolution, terrorism… Untold numbers of human deaths and injuries. Although the colonial system is now defunct, nevertheless its influence on the ideology and psyche of humankind remains deep and entrenched, and awaits urgent elimination. I believe that it is extremely significant that a scholar of comparative literature who hails from Italy, the birthplace of the literary renaissance, Professor Armando Gnisci of Rome's Università la Sapienza, in his work *Comparative Literature as a Discipline of Decolonialization*, raises this question. He points out: for former Western colonies, the comparative literature discipline represents a means to understand, study and realize the process of decolonization.

As far as the European academics that had heretofore held ID cards of superiority and privilege are concerned, for them to recognize that they form part of the "post-colonial world" and to learn how to live like the ordinary citizens of the former colonies and to coexist is not easy. On the one hand, this demands self-criticism, whilst on the other they must rely on the cooperation and goodwill of their opposites. He states:

> It is not possible to simply rely on our own strength and with the psychology of our traditional philosophy as a foundation, achieve this type of "*askesis*/strict self-discipline"; on the contrary, it is only through comparison, an inclination to listen to others, and after looking at oneself from the perspective of others that it becomes possible. By these means we will eventually be able to learn from others as well as from ourselves those things that we could never develop through any other means. And today, none of this would require us to leave home in order to be realized because others have already come to meet us. Their aim is not military subjugation or to bash people around the head with their cultural superiority, but with the hope of living amongst us with equal dignity."[1]

Professor Gnisci believes that in a world that has been unavoidably dubbed "post-colonial," for European academics to cast aside their own colonialist tendencies, this infers the logic of accepting equal coexistence with other ethnic cultures. "This logic is built on the foundation of mutual benefit between the people of Europe and those who have thrown off European colonialism." He especially stresses: "As far as a European academic is concerned, this is indeed the most pressing and important spiritual and critical responsibility of today."[2]

Professor Gnisci's views obviously represent the newest trend in comparative literature which is currently expanding and strengthening in Europe, and he warmly calls on the intellectuals of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and all regions, and especially scholars of comparative literature, to respond.

From the point of view of those regions that had previously been colonized or part-colonized, the most important question at present is how, in the postcolonial global context, should we treat our own traditional culture? Because the traditional

[1]Armando Gnisci, "Comparative Literature as a Discipline of Decolonialization" in Matthew F. Rusnak [trans.] *We, the Europeans: Italian Essays on Postcolonialism* (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 2014), Chapter 2.

[2]Ibid., p. 6.

cultures of these regions have, for a long period, been infiltrated and distorted by Western culture, as soon as they are released from the oppression of the colonial yoke, what people initially think of is, naturally, how they can restore and develop their own native culture and disseminate it abroad. This trend is totally reasonable and cannot be questioned. However, a type of ultra-nationalism invariably arises along with this new consciousness, and ethnicities with a long history, a dazzling culture or a rich tradition are especially prone to this kind of sentiment. To those who are intoxicated by such sentiments, since their own culture has already been stifled for many centuries, why should they not now raise an eyebrow and aspirate, and "singly flaunt their awesomeness for the world to see"? They argue that the retreat of West-centrism heralds the rise of an alternative focus, such as East-centrism, to take its place. Obviously, this kind of thinking is incapable of creating anything new. If "East-centrism" were to replace the former "West-centrism," it would only be a morphing or reproduction of the West-centrist ideology in a different era and under different circumstances; in other words, the suppression of one type of culture by another. In reality, whether or not one culture is capable of being accepted and utilized by another cannot be determined by wishful thinking. First it depends whether this culture (or literature) is capable of being understood by the alternative culture; whether it is able to make a positive contribution to that culture and to attract that culture's interest and become a resource for the development of that culture and be consciously absorbed by that culture. Today, contact between Eastern and Western cultures can only be transacted in completely different ways to that which operated in the past, with complementarity, mutual recognition and mutual utility as the principles for voluntary bilateral exchange. This type of exchange is precisely the bedrock of postcolonial comparative literature.

On the question of how to deal with the post-colonial native cultural traditions and to develop comparative literature, apart from the abovementioned adjustment mentality, there are two further important questions that we must consider. One of these is how to understand traditional culture and what kind of traditional culture should we use in our interaction with the outside world? The second question is how should this interaction be conducted—by what means?

The culture that we are speaking of is not necessarily set in stone, an immutable "cultural relic," but rather is constantly offering, in the unrelenting flow of time, new interpretations, with the benefit of contemporary consciousness, of ready-formed "mature cultural objects," and imbuing them with new meaning. It is a currently functioning assemblage of the active expression of the contemporary society as a whole, including the creation and expression of meaning, and all manner of interpretive activities. Thus, it should of necessity be a type of continually developing, constantly forming "object under construction." Obviously our current attitude towards China's culture will be different to that of the Pre-Qin, Han-Wei, High Tang or Song-Ming periods. All use the current consciousness of the era to redefine their culture. The Chinese culture that we use today to interact with the world is also not some so-called "intrinsic," immutable "treasure" that is just waiting to be unearthed, but is primarily a fully formed product which includes

a philosophical trove, a literary and artistic oeuvre, a sophisticated economic and legal system and more that we should interpret and exploit in the context of our current consciousness. There is no doubt that in today's world of unprecedented advancements in information and communication, this so-called current consciousness cannot but be infiltrated by all manner of externally originated consciousnesses. In fact, all cultures develop and mature under the influence of other cultures and it is useless and even impossible to attempt to turn one's back on history and contemporary reality and "seek one's roots" or search for some pristine native culture. Even though China has never been a colony, present-day Chinese have great difficulty in completely eliminating the century or more of influence from the West and restore themselves to the status of a pure traditional Chinese person, much like the citizens of the Song Dynasty found it impossible to reject the influence of India and return to the status that they had in the Pre-Qin or twin-Han period. For this reason, when we participate in exchanges with the outside world, this should occur through the interpretation of our contemporary consciousness, in a modern manner and one that can be understood by the present world, and moreover, we should continually improve Chinese culture through interaction with the rest of the world.

The question of how best to interact and by what means presents a difficult paradox. In order to interact, you must have the tools wherewith to interact. In other words, you need a discourse which is capable of mutual intercourse. This so-called discourse is in fact a set of rules of dialog which are mutually accepted and understood by both sides. The first question encountered on the occasion of cultural contact is what discourse should be employed for the ensuing intercourse? If a completely alien discourse is used, the native culture will be integrated into the web of the alien culture and its own defining characteristics will be lost and a number of precious, unique qualities that do not conform to that alien paradigm will be cast aside and gradually sink into oblivion. Then again, if the discourse of the native culture alone is used to facilitate the intercourse, then not only will this make it difficult for members of the alien culture to understand, but also a pure native cultural discourse will also be difficult to find because all cultures develop under the continuing influence of foreign cultures and exchanges with those cultures. Only if we genuinely understand this paradox will we be able to affect genuine cultural rapprochement. The refraction theory suggested by the French theoretician, Pierre Bourdieu, in his book *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* is proving quite inspirational in reflecting on this question. He argues that social phenomena cannot be directly reflected in literature but must be refracted by the literary field. Literature forms a literary production field through its history, its special characteristics and its common principles that are tacitly agreed through common usage, etc., and the social phenomena external to this field can only be reflected on that field by refraction and not by direct projection because [these phenomena] must of necessity be transformed by how they are used by that literary field, just like a chopstick changes shape because of refraction if placed in a bowl of water. It cannot remain completely the same as it would if it is external to that literary stage. If we apply this theory to cultural contact and dialog, we can say that

any contact between culture A and culture B will necessarily produce this kind of refractive phenomenon. When any group or individual who belongs to culture A enters culture B, he inevitably will carry the values of his own cultural arena—its mode of thinking, its tacitly agreed rules, etc.,—and thus cause culture A to be refracted and change shape in the course of his research and deliberations. For example, when Chinese culture enters the foreign cultural arena, Chinese culture must pass through the sieve of that foreign culture and thus be changed, including misreading, excessive interpretation, etc. Similarly, when foreign cultures enter the arena of Chinese culture, they are inevitably subject to Chinese cultural choices and are injected with Chinese interpretations and so undergo change. In reality, throughout history, all cultures, when they absorb and benefit from another they are only able to do so through this type of selecting, misreading, excessive interpretation and other distortion in order to be successful. I have often heard it said that only Chinese people are really able to understand China. The unspoken inference seems to be that foreign opinions of China are not worth taking seriously. In fact, there is no necessity for foreigners to understand China like Chinese people do. They only need to, according to their own cultural rules, choose and take those portions of Chinese culture that interest them and adapt them to their own requirements. France's Voltaire and Germany's Gottfried Leibniz have both gained much inspiration from Chinese culture, but what they deem to be Chinese culture had long since been refracted by missionaries and thus reformed, yet this reformed product is precisely the precondition for their capacity to be inspired. Today when we return again to analyze how Voltaire and Leibniz came to understand and utilize Chinese culture through the prism of their own culture, we are offered a completely new perspective from which to form a completely different understanding of our own familiar culture. Thus we are able to, within our own respective discourses; accomplish a type of independent cultural dialog. The discourses used here are both our own, as well as having undergone a certain degree of change in the cultural landscape of the other party. Historically, mutual benefit, and mutual recognition between two different cultures has largely been conducted along these lines. For example, ancient China in its own cultural domain employed its own discourse in its dialog with Indian Buddhism. The result was the creation of Chinese Zen. The British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, believed that it has been proven on many occasions that exchanges between different cultures in the past have been milestones in the development of human civilization. The Greeks learned from the Egyptians and the Romans borrowed from the Greeks' experience. The Arabs learned from imperial Rome and in the middle ages, Europe emulated the Arabs. Renaissance Europe in fact imitated the Byzantine Empire. Obviously, after the Greek and Roman cultures mentioned above had absorbed other cultures, they remained primarily Greek or Roman cultures, but they were different Greek and Roman cultures to what they had been before their contact with the other cultures. As the Chinese author Lu Xun remarked, having eaten beef and mutton, it does not necessarily follow that you are able to tell the difference between an ox and a sheep. From this perspective, the future development of world culture will not

deliver that type of cultural "grand hybrid"[3] that Frédéric Loliée predicted, but rather the coexistence of all ethnic cultures with their different distinguishing characteristics.

What we have outlined above is merely the historical phenomenon of past cultural contact, but we naturally are also able to more consciously seek out other new paths. For example, it is possible to consciously find a type of compromise between two different discourses, and this compromise is capable of consummately expressing the unique color and originality of both sides, sufficient to break through the currently existing paradigms of both sides and offer to the opposite side a new foothold from which to suggest new lines of enquiry and to reach new conclusions. For example, together solving some of the problems faced by humanity can be seen as a type of compromise. Despite the fact that humanity is so diverse, nevertheless there exist a considerable number of things in common which are capable of creating this concept of humanity. In the field of literature, since mankind shares a number of life patterns that are largely similar (such as male-female, old-young, interpersonal, man and nature, man and his fate, etc.) as well as experiences (joy and pain, jubilation and grief, parting and reunion, hope and despair, love and hate, birth and death, etc.), so literature which takes human life patterns and experience as its principal content is certainly capable of confronting a large number of common questions such as "the meaning of death," "the ecological environment." "the last days of man," "the phenomenon of utopia," or "escapism" and more in literature. People from different cultural paradigms are all capable of forming their own responses to these common questions that nobody is capable of avoiding, but they will do so according to their own different historical experience, style of living and mode of thinking. Only through this kind of dialog between multiple cultural paradigms will these questions find in our era a most consummate answer and at the same time, open up an even more expansive vision and prospect to answer them in the future. In this process of seeking answers through equal dialog, perhaps old discourses may be utilized; however what is more important is that new discourses will gradually be formed. These new discourses are both historical and modern, international and national. And in the course of the formation of these discourses, all ethnic groups in the world are capable of achieving genuine mutual understanding.

Looking back at the past from the standpoint of the postcolonial present, the past century of comparative literature development admittedly has many questions, however it has still made many great contributions and we should carry on their legacy, and the recent new developments in comparative literature with American literary theory at its core and French formism and history of the psyche as its focus are especially deserving of a thorough summation. Just as Western culture over the

[3]Frédéric Loliée, *A Short History of Comparative Literature: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. Trans. M. Douglas Power (London: Kennikat, 1906). Available at: https://archive.org/stream/shorthistoryofco00loliuoft/shorthistoryofco00loliuoft_djvu.txt. For the Chinese translation, see Luoliai: *Bijiao wenxue shi*, translated by Fu Dong (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989), p. 352.

past 500 years has made a glorious contribution to the development of human culture, we should never take West-centrism as an excuse and thus ignore or deny it; otherwise it would lead to a comprehensive retreat of human culture. We can only advance on this preexisting, robust foundation. In fact, this foundation belongs to mankind as a whole; because it is based on the material wealth provided by the colonies and has also been formed by the absorption of a certain proportion of spiritual resources from these regions. That type of "cultural tribalism" which rejects all Western influence and is obsessed with the return to one's native domain is not only theoretically impractical, but also in practical terms could constitute the basis of some "culture war" and thus threaten the future of human progress.

If we look back over the past 20 years of progress in comparative literature, the fact that literary theory has formed the nucleus of comparative literature is not incidental. At the beginning of the 1980s, the dean of Yale University's faculty of comparative literature, Paul de Man, argued that "there is no doubt that the heart of comparative literature research is theory." Back in 1979 he had already pointed out that "there is absolutely no reason why analyses of the kind here suggested for Proust would not be applicable, with proper modifications of technique, to Milton or to Dante or to Hölderlin."[4] I should add that the experience of a number of critics both in China and abroad has shown that if a certain theory is of real value, then it can just as readily be applied to Chinese works as to other works. Worthwhile theories are truly universal, as Chales Bernheimer, former president of the American Comparative Literature Association said in summarizing the influence of theory on all fields of literary research over the last 20 years.[5]

The theories that Bernheimer mentions above are not unknown in China's literary circles. Most of them have already been translated into Chinese and have, moreover, been used in explaining Chinese literary phenomena, forming a period of popular cross-Straits Chinese comparative literature "elucidatory research." But does this type of phenomenon run counter to the ethnic character of Chinese comparative literature? It must be admitted that the phenomena of wholesale adoption and force-fitting truly exists in this process of "elucidatory research," and blind reverence for the West and a colonialist mentality of only what is new is worth considering is not completely unheard of. However, on the whole, the entry of these theories have opened up new ways of thinking in Chinese literary research and offered new perspectives and have been instrumental in discovering new materials and raising new questions. From a theoretical perspective, these Western theories enter the Chinese lexicon, are filtered and remodeled by China's cultural framework, and then are further transformed by China's literary and artistic practice. They are thus Sinicized and are no longer the original unchanged Western theories. In reality, if we reject the East-West binary opposite fixed mode of

[4]Paul de Man, *Allegory of Readings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 16–17.

[5]Charles Bernheimer, *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Universiy Press, 1995), p. 7.

thinking and observe from the new perspective of globalization, then it does not matter which theories originate from where, so long as they are reasonable, useful, and able to solve real questions. If so, they can all be adopted and utilized. The fact that Marxism, which arose from Western capitalist society, when introduced to the East where industry was still undeveloped, played such a transformational role is eloquent testimony to this.

Naturally, what we have covered above is merely one aspect of the question. Another aspect is how in the past under the colonial system, the cultural creativity of the peoples of colonial and semicolonial countries was unavoidably suppressed by the cultural hegemony of the Western colonizers and this had a huge influence on the possibility of using non-Western culture to interpret Western culture. In a postcolonial world, the development of multiculturalism will inevitably usher in a new modernization and new prosperity to the cultures of all ethnicities. This will allow theories which have arisen from the soil of non-Western culture the opportunity to be employed to expound Western culture, make a valuable contribution and be utilized by the West. This type of bidirectional exposition is precisely a new mode of cultural dialog and it will inevitably make new contributions to the development of human culture. Finally, an extremely interesting cultural phenomenon has emerged: scholars who have studied Eastern cultures in the past, such as Sinologists, have been seen as mysterious individuals, situated on the periphery with no affiliation to comparative literature. Meanwhile, because non-Western languages have been too difficult for scholars of comparative literature or, for various psychological reasons, they have largely remained at a respectful distance from non-Western cultures or held them in contempt. But in recent years, the situation has changed. Some renowned scholars of comparative literature have begun to concern themselves with the conditions and development of Eastern cultures, such as the venerable scholar of comparative literature, the Frenchman René Étiemble who, at the close of the 1980s completed his monumental work *L'Europe chinoise*. The former president of the International Comparative Literature Association, Earl Miner, at the beginning of the 1990s published his *Comparative poetics: an intercultural essay on theories of literature*. The former president of the International Comparative Literature Association, Professor D.W. Fokkema in his edited work, *Comparative Literature and the New Paradigm*, whilst discussing modernism and postmodernism, also inserted content relating to the East. These renowned Sinologists thus began to enter the field of comparative literature. For example, at almost the same time, Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova, the Canadian Sinologist with a deep knowledge of Chinese traditional fiction and modern literature, also published her work which had a similar title to that of Professor Miner, namely *Poetics East and West*. What is different is that the former concentrated on the West and Japan, and the latter on the West and China. Some extremely accomplished middle-aged Sinologists such as Stephen Owen, Wolfgang Kubin and others either obliquely or directly, to a greater or lesser extent, inserted theories and methodologies of comparative literature into their own works on Chinese literature. In 1993, the president of the American Comparative Literature Association, Charles Bernheimer, in his report summarizing 10 years of American

comparative literature and its future development entitled *Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century* specifically stressed that "comparatists should be alert to the significant differences within any national culture, which provide a basis for comparison, research, and critical-theoretical inquiry."[6] He called on students of comparative literature to broaden their linguistic horizons, strive to include at the very least one non-European language and consider more closely "the role of a native tongue in creating subjectivity, in establishing epistemological patterns, in imagining communal structures, in forming notions of nationhood, and in articulating resistance and accommodation to political and cultural hegemony."[7] All of this provides an excellent contextual opportunity and spurs us to sum up and dig into the distinguishing characteristics of our own traditional ethnic culture even more thoroughly (including literature, and especially poetics), and in the process of mutual elucidation, enable it to become an important resource for propelling world culture towards future expansion.

From the above analysis we can see that literary theory and methodology has a strong international component and the foundation of that internationalism is ethnicity. Research into the cultures of different ethnic groups and literary theories is the easiest way to bring together the students of comparative literature to participate in a beneficial dialog. Therefore, literary theory quite rightly occupies a pivotal place in the discipline of comparative literature. Naturally the "theory" that we speak of here refers to that which relates to literature itself, theoretical research that is conducted at an abstract level. It differs from literary criticism in that it does not interpret the successes and failures of specific works of literature. It also differs from the history of literature in that it does not make an historical evaluation of works of literature. However, literary texts remain the foundation of theory. Literary theory studies the mode and patterns of literary texts and how literary meaning (the nature of literature or literariness) is produced through these modes and patterns. It should offer a program which is capable of illustrating the shared characteristics and differences between works, and ascertain the principles and methods of their historical significance. Literary theory is not merely a synthesis of literary experience, nor is it just a summation of the evolution of literature to date, but it is the study, on this foundation, of its potential stylistic abstraction and an attempt to illustrate how this style governs the literary text's generative capacity and expression. On the one hand, it gathers together literary knowledge and inserts it into the theoretical tapestry that is composed of the theories of contemporary philosophy, linguistics, semiotics, aesthetics, dissemination theory and more, while on the other it utilizes the new results that these theories deliver. It not only studies the content that a specific cultural history reflects, but more importantly, it studies how designated cultural historical content is reflected in works of literature. In other words, how it is

[6]Charles Bernheimer, "Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century." Report on Professional Standards to the American Comparative Literature Association, 1993. Availbale at http://www.umass.edu/complit/aclanet/Bernheim.html [Accessed 1/9/2015].

[7]Ibid.

"formalized." Here what is more important is the function of form, including the application of form and technique, and how the modes and patterns are created by literary meaning differ between eras and in different cultural contexts.

The question that further progress in contemporary literary theory is faced with is how to sum up the experience and theories that all the different ethnic cultures of the world have accumulated over a long period of time and from different perspectives attempt to resolve the questions that mankind encounters in the realm of literature. In the process of exchange, proximity, debate, and mutual permeation between the different ethnic literary theories, there is no doubt that a new set of concepts, categories, and hypotheses will be forged. These new concepts, categories, and hypotheses will not only usher in a new international and modern era where literary theory will constitute a discipline of theoretical science on the foundation of an amalgam of East and West from the ancient through to the modern, but also through mutual contrast, the real face, value, and spirit of the poetics of all ethnicities will be further revealed. In this process, the comparative literature of the new century will undoubtedly witness comprehensive and new development.

Professor Bernheimer pointed out in his report: "The present moment is particularly propitious for such a review since progressive tendencies in literary studies, toward a multicultural, global, and interdisciplinary curriculum, are comparative in nature."[8] This distinguishing feature of comparative literature will ensure that this scientific discipline will maintain its front-line position in research in the humanities. Ultimately, at this time of end-of-century cultural adjustment, the science of comparative literature is not in mortal danger, but rather stands on the threshold of even more ambitious and magnificent expansion. And China's comparative literature circles have already made comprehensive preparations in anticipation of welcoming the arrival of this mighty new era.

[8]Ibid.

Chapter 25
Poetics and Eurocentrism: In Memory of Yang Zhouhan

Yang Zhouhan's engagement in scholarship displays acute foresight and meticulous argument. He regularly analyses questions in Western literature in a Chinese linguistic context and also often addresses questions of Chinese literature in a Western language context. What he pursues is fair and equitable scholarly conclusions that accord with reality and very rarely makes value judgments that display personal or ethnic prejudice. This research methodology of his has consistently won my admiration. The gentleman's scholarly swansong, *Critiquing Eurocentrism*, is a typical example of this research methodology.

Critiquing Eurocentrism was written in English by Yang between September 1988 and June 1989 when he was a research fellow at the American Humanities Research Center. It is a fine work of mature reflection which runs to more than 30,000 words and was completed after Yang had consulted a huge number of primary sources and summed up questions that he had pondered over many years. The work not only reveals his profound erudition and depth of thought, but it also amply demonstrates the "soul of a Chinese person" that the master has repeatedly emphasized as being crucially important in people who are studying foreign literature.

Yang has never seen "Eurocentrism" as a derogatory term and was even less inclined to use it as a stick with which to beat people. He first explained so-called Eurocentrism as a "Means of pondering questions from a European point of view, and Europeans cannot help but regard others from some sort of European perspective". For this reason, while they are studying Chinese poetry, they quite naturally are more attracted to "lyric poetry, romantic poetry, symbolist poetry, poetry of pathos and quirky poetry", which accord with their own traditions, and with regard to the realism tendency, social criticism and historical themes in Chinese poetry, and then they tend more to ignore them, which is quite natural. However, as a Chinese person, one must have the soul of a Chinese and we must not adopt the perspective of a European as our own but instead should start from the perspective of a Chinese and present one's own traditions holistically, otherwise China's unique literary paradigm will be diluted, leading people to wrongly believe that there is only one paradigm in this world and that is the European cultural

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D. Yue, *China and the West at the Crossroads*, China Academic Library,
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paradigm. And if this were to continue for long, then the multicultural ecology would be destroyed and obliterated. What is more, cultural invariance will inevitably bring to a halt cultural progress because there will no longer be an "other" with which to establish mutual reference and no possibility of multiple perspectives from which to deeply understand oneself. In other words, there would be no complementarity, mutual confirmation and mutual acknowledgement, so no possibility of any new cultural creation.

Yang further took the question of periodization of the Baroque and the history of literature and separately and penetratingly probed the issues raised above.

The Baroque is a relatively unfamiliar terminology for Chinese readers and right up to the 1960s the term was not mentioned in the *Foreign Literature* volume of the *Chinese Encyclopedia*. However, from the moment that Baroque expanded from being a gaudy, flamboyant, and meticulous style concept to being a cultural feature of a specific period, it came prominently into vogue in Europe in the 17th century and has continued to flourish ever since. As René Wellek has said: "Baroque has provided an aesthetic term which has helped us to understand the literature of the time and which will help us to break the dependence of most literary history from periodisations derived from political and social history… it is a term which prepares for synthesis, draws our minds away from the mere accumulation of observations and facts, and paves the way for a future history of literature as a fine art."[1] Yang believes: "Research into the baroque not only assists us in the interpretation of the development of the history of literature, but it is extremely important in gaining an in-depth understanding of a unique form of literary expression. This form of expression is both linked to an age and is also universal… as a literary narrative and critical discourse, the baroque offers us a new perspective."[2] Thus it is imperative that we thoroughly research the Baroque and introduce it into China.

Yang initially indicates that the origin of the term *baroque* is very likely an adaptation of the Portuguese term *Barroco* and was originally a term used by the jewelry merchants to describe the form of irregularly shaped pearls. As an artistic style, baroque was first used to describe a feature of renaissance Italian architecture which rejected the well-proportioned, balanced and rational principles of medieval architecture and sought new strange shapes like oval windows, spiral columns, needle-point domes, polygons, palm fronds, a number of meaningless decorations, and more, which gave people a sense of irregularity and instability. It was impossible to discern a clear relationship between the part and the whole and it generated a visually illusional and dramatic effect. In terms of art and sculpture, the baroque was expressed through exaggerated emotion, intense contrast, and distorted images which presented strong and painful emotions and a tense spiritual atmosphere. In literature, the baroque was expressed in a type of melancholic, dejected, grieving, pitiful psyche where reality was blurred and hallucination was encouraged, where

[1]René Wellek, "The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship," *The Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism*, Vol. V, No. 2 (December, 1946), p. 97.

[2]Yang Zhouhan, "Baluoke de hanyi, biaoxian he yingyong," *Guowai wenxue*, vol. 1 (1987).

emotions were indulged and mystery was pursued. Imagery tended towards the strange and gaudy, designed to stir people's senses, rhythms and plots full of drama, the frequent use of odd thinking and clever concepts, contradictory and crafty language, exaggeration and unusual metaphor.

After comprehensively researching and coming to an understanding of the baroque in the West, Yang went on to investigate and comment on the practice of a few eminent Sinologists who applied the baroque style to traditional Chinese poetics. Ever since the 1960s, a considerable number of scholars believe that the 8th and 9th centuries can be seen to mark the baroque period in Chinese literature. For example, in 1969 Lie Ruoyu published his *Li Shangyin: China's 9th Century Baroque Poet* in which he argued that Li Shangyin's pursuit of the flamboyant, even the weird, deliberately seeking an outrageous effect and a tendency towards gaudiness and meticulousness, are all hallmarks of the baroque. In 1970 the U.S. published *New Perspectives on Chinese Literature* asserting that the 9th century Chinese poets deliberately distorted the world because of their sensitivity. They are especially focused on the fluctuations and irregularity of objects… the sensory world entrances them with its gaudy colors and myriad shapes and enchants them with its ceaselessly changing mirages. A doctoral dissertation published in 1973 entitled *Meng Jiao's Poetry in China's Baroque Tradition* also termed the 100 years between 750 and 850 CE Chinese literature's baroque period. In essence, they argued that in this period, the Chinese world of poetry, represented by Li Shangyin, Meng Jiao, Jia Dao, Lu Tong and Han Yu, witnessed a tide similar to the 17th century European "orthodox baroque", and that this tide on the one hand pursued fantastic sensory illusion and on the other, a reverence for transcendent metaphysical reflection.

Yang delved deeply into this question. He initially made a penetrating comparative analysis of Li Shangyin's "The Embroidered Harp" and Richard Glashaw's "Ode to Saint Teresa," the third poem in Meng Jiao's "Grief for the Gorge" 《峡哀》 and John Donne's "The Storm" as an example, and pointed out that while these poems evinced many superficial similarities, nevertheless, the psyche of the poet and cultural background that they revealed were quite different. He went further and revealed the differences in terms of social history and traditional thought between 17th century Europe and 9th century China.[3] Yang believes that to force Western literary concepts onto non-Western materials brings into focus the shortcomings of West-centrism. But if Westerners cast aside these shortcomings and strive to understand Chinese literature from a Chinese perspective and learn the methodology and mode by which Chinese people understand and enjoy their own literature, then they will discover a whole different world. And this discovery will broaden their horizons and aid in them reaching an even deeper understanding of the distinguishing features of their own literature. Yang states: "I have always stressed difference and uniqueness, but I certainly do not turn a blind eye to similarity or the area of mutual layering between different literatures and cultures. It is

[3]Yang Zhouhan, "Ouzhou zhongxin zhuyi," *Zhongguo bijiao wenxue*, vol. 3 (1989).

just that I believe that difference rather than similarity is more able to promote mutual understanding."[4]

After carefully discussing the individual cases of the baroque, Yang went on to delve deeper into the question of whether or not it was possible to periodize Chinese literary history using the Western concepts regarding their own literary history. This first touches on the question of whether, like economics or politics, can the literature of the world's various ethnic groups be similarly periodized according to a common rule? In other words, if we believe that Western literature on the whole has developed according to the stages of classicism, neo-classicism, romanticism, modernism, symbolism and the baroque etc., did Chinese literature experience an analogous parallel development? The Sinologist J. D. Frodsham believes that since Western markers like "feudal" and "capitalist" have been applied to the history of non-Western societies, then why can't Western literary concepts be applied to the history of Chinese poetry? According to Frodsham, in China, the romantic trend began with the songs of Chu and reached its zenith with Li Bai. Li He was the last romantic poet, after which romanticism gave way to the symbolist period, after which the baroque school represented by Han Yu, Meng Jiao and Lu Tong emerged.

Yang employed primary sources and broadly researched the theory and practice of all periodization methods. He offered a huge body of evidence to demonstrate that if you use any Western literary periodization method and impose it on the history of Chinese literature, it is littered with holes. But at the same time, the discussion by Western scholars of periodization theories and the questions that they pose are extremely enlightening to us. As the Spanish scholar of comparative literature, Claudio Guillen pointed out: in any era there is always a primary trend as well as an untold number of tributary trends. Therefore, a given historical period should be unitarily understood as an undivided whole, but should be understood as a temporal process which consists of diverse or coexisting groups moving in parallel. Yang agrees with this view, pointing out that: first of all, in any given period, many different tendencies which are either similar or diverse will coexist at the same time and it is possible from certain similar aspects to induce several trends into a certain type of tide, but that this cannot summarize their differing aspects. In fact, even if a certain prominent mainstream is identified, there will still be quite a number of tributary streams that are developing and which can possibly possess an even greater vitality. In any event, literary history itself does not develop as a block. If one era replaces another then the previous era is not always completely negated. Rather, in most cases it is a type of accommodating succession. If we determine a periodized historical object as being dynamic and pluralistic, then it is not so difficult to accept the concept of multiple stages. Yang believes that literature is an integral part of the overall cultural activity of a specific society and therefore the ideal mark of the historical periodization of literature should be built on a view of the literary history as a whole. Because it is virtually impossible to label this

[4]Ibid.

"whole" or dynamic or pluralistic, therefore scholars of literary history are frequently forced to use "chronological terminology" and force ordinary historical periodization onto literary periodization. However, the division, according to pure "chronology", can at times take on an enriched meaning, such as the English Elizabethan period or China's "High Tang" or "Wei-Jin".

Through these two separate cases of comparative analysis—viewing China from the West and viewing the West from China, Yang went on to conduct an integrated inspection. He exhaustively employed a huge body of materials to analyze and describe the European attitude towards China since the 17th century: from vagueness, surprise and praise to denunciation and abuse and back to praise again. All of this obviously did not reflect a change in China itself. Instead, it reflected mostly on Europe's own requirements at different stages of their development and is also a type of manifestation of Euro-centrism. Yang believes that the creation of this type of phenomenon is not surprising because all people are restricted by history and by their own culture. The different stages of development of Euro-centrism, no matter whether it manifests itself through admiration or vilification of China, demonstrates two different descriptive strategies, namely exaggeration and analogy: to describe China as a territory that has a perfect government and is possessed of boundless riches is to exaggerate just as much as if China was described as a state that was barbarous and ruled by a dictatorship. By so-called analogy is meant the use of one pattern and forcing a comparison between two different cultures. No matter whether exaggeration or analogy, they are both bound to harm the independence of the different cultures. However, as far as a culture which possesses great cultural strength, this type of harm is not sufficient to really destroy its independence. Even political hegemony would have a negligible effect on this type of independence. One example is that the Japanese military and political occupation of China during the War of Resistance against Japan was unable to change Chinese culture. But this is not to deny the mutual influence between different cultures. It only means that this type of influence is free and voluntary and not forced. For example, Japanese poetry borrowed heavily from such imagery as the "weeping willow", "chrysanthemum" or "moon" in Chinese poetry while they very rarely accepted such common concepts in Chinese poetry as the "cry of an ape", "a beautiful woman" or "heart-broken". The reason for these choices is complex. In the final analysis, if Europeans were able to cast aside their Euro-centric bias and try to look at China from a different angle, they would discover in Chinese culture a far richer and more colorful world.

Yang goes on to point out that there is no distinction of superior and inferior cultures, no higher or lower. There is no phenomenon of status or rank. For example, it cannot be said that the logic and method of analytical thinking of the Western tradition is superior to the common Chinese "an intuitive comprehension" mode of thinking. Yang quotes I. A. Richards. from his work *Mencius on the Mind:* "The danger that we must be alert to is the mindset that tends to force a structure on something that it fundamentally inappropriate for… Chinese thought is now taking over and absorbing the whole developed Western logical technique; and it will do so more perfectly and in a more balanced way and make fewer avoidable mistakes,

if it does not turn its back upon ancient Chinese thinking—relegating it to a position of historical interest."[5] In conclusion, Yang states: "In the field of Chinese literary research, people have recognized that it is inappropriate to force European concepts onto Chinese literature." He passionately appeals for the "removal of centrism" and calls for a new era in comparative literature, an era of dialog and exchange focusing on the defining characteristics of all cultures, an era of mutual admonishment, mutual consideration and supplementarity.

To summarize our discussion, Yang's scholarly swansong, *Criticising Eurocentrism*, is obviously not simply a "critique" of "Euro-centrism", but rather it is a crystallization of his mature reflection over many years on the relationship between the cultures and literatures of China and the West. It is also a summary of his own ultimate provisions for the nature, defining characteristics, content and methodologies of China's science of comparative literature. Yang has left us and already 10 years have passed by in an instant, but fortunately China's comparative literature discipline is currently forging robustly ahead along the path that Yang pioneered, and no matter the strength of our contingent, nor the substantiveness or otherwise of our achievements, the dedication of our united old, middle and young scholars will always be able to comfort the master's soul in heaven.

[5]Richards, I. A. (Ivor Armstrong), *Mencius on the Mind: Experiments on Multiple Definition* (London: Kegan Paul, 1932), p. xiii.

Chapter 26
The Question of Discourse in the Dialog Between Chinese and Western Poetics

We are situated at a transformational juncture for global culture, where engagement between Eastern and Western cultures has become an inevitability. So it is in this context that we will discuss Sino-Western comparative poetics. Poetics is a complex concept that has gradually deepened with the progress of human history. We can define it according to different historical periods and the defining characteristics of different cultural paradigms; however it is difficult to respond with a simple and definitive answer to the question, what is poetics? Our response today can be generated from the foundation of the past, however it will be completely different from that of the past, and any future response will undoubtedly also differ from that of today. Therefore, when we speak of poetics, we cannot but maintain a type of global and historical perspective, and that is the perspective of comparative poetics.

Western poetics arose in ancient Greece. At the time, the term poetics was used broadly to refer to common literary theory. Aristotle's famous work on literary theory, *Poetics*, for example, was the first attempt at a systematic study of literary theory, and it was also the beginning of the use of the philosophical method to study literary theory. Since the Roman period, Quintus Horatius Flaccus's [Horace] famous *Ars Poetica* which stressed perfect form, was at the time even more influential than *Poetics* and the term poetics also gradually came to be used in a narrow sense, predominately in the discussion of poetry and rhetoric. It wasn't until after the renaissance that Aristotle's *Poetics* became a classic which had widespread influence and was quoted regularly. In the 18th century, Germany's "literary science" school was already widely using the term poetics to refer to literary theory in a broad sense, but it was the Russian formalist school and the later modern form theory that truly restored the term poetics as a common terminology in literary theory, and especially the structuralists and semioticians. In 1956 Roman Jacobson pointed out in his famous work *Closing Statements: Linguistics and Poetics*[1]:

[1]In Thomas A. Sebeok, *Style In Language* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), pp. 350–377.

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Poetics principally discusses this question what is it that transforms a linguistic message into a work of art? It is precisely because the main object of poetics is linguistic art, along with other arts, and the exceptional nature of the relationship between the behaviors of artistic language and other languages that poetics so deservingly occupies such a dominant position in literary research. Following the Second World War, the new criticism school, French structuralism, psychoanalysis, archetypical critical theory, hermeneutics, deconstructionism, semiotic literary research, Western Marxism, feminist literary criticism, and other ideological trends arose in succession. The rapid transformation of these trends earned them the epithet of "each taking the lead for 500 days," however they did leave a scar on Western poetics and these "gradual accretions" have formed an important part of Western poetics.

Eastern poetics does not have a concept which corresponds completely with the Western term "poetics"; however China, India and the Arabic world each have their own poetics system with its own origin and development trajectory. In China, for example, more than a century before Aristotle Confucius had already offered a wide range of poetics concepts and defined the meaning of literature using the relationship between literature and ethics and literature and society. Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi introduced such concepts as "empty quietude," "nature," etc., and expounded such aesthetic ideals as eschewing utilitarian goals, seeking absolute freedom, and becoming one with nature. When Buddhism entered China, its doctrines of emergence from nothingness and solitude combined with the Daoist spirit of dilution and letting things take their own course to form an important source of traditional Chinese poetics. The Wei-Jin and North-South Dynasties period[2] was a period of literary consciousness and poetics developed vigorously with such new propositions as *yixiang*, *fenggu,* and *shensi*. Liu Xie's *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* fused the three schools of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism into one, forming a bridge between the past and the present and became China's first systematic masterpiece of literary theory. As Lu Xun noted: "The East has Liu Xie's [Liu Yanhe] *Literary Mind*, and the West has Aristotle's *Poetics*."[3] After *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, China's treatises on poetics multiplied exponentially and gradually formed China's unique poetics milieu. This milieu took the interconnectedness between heaven and man as well as communion with nature as its loftiest state, and the symbolic space created by language, and at the same time transcending language itself, as the focus of its research. It also studied the different strategies for creating this space and people's comprehension of this space. The expression of this milieu is characterized by intellectually melding the evidence of the poet's relationship with his art, the meditation of the poetry critic on the basic essence of the poem, and through the experience of the sagacious reader of "the

[2]The Wei–Jin and North–South Dynasties (魏晋南北朝) is a generic term for the historic period 220–589 between the Han and the Sui in Chinese history.

[3]Lu Xun, "Tiji yi pian," in *Lu Xun quanji* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), vol.8, p. 18.

essence of heaven and earth" [as expressed in the] "supra-linguistic imagery" [of the poem]. China's outstanding "remarks on poetry" or *shihua* writers regularly combine the qualities of the poet, the critic and the sagacious reader and *shihua* is the optimum means of expressing this. Since the Tang-Song[4] period, Si Kongtu's *Twenty-four Poetic Criticisms* and Yan Yu's the *Canglang Remarks on Poetry* greatly enriched this milieu and Wang Fuzhi and Ye Xie of the Ming and Qing further summarized and elevated the milieu, adding a huge body of fiction and drama theory, and China's traditional poetics entered its own mature era.

Obviously, Western poetics have undertaken substantial analysis, especially of linguistic semiotics itself, in order to privilege conceptual accuracy and clear reasoning. Meanwhile, Chinese poetics stresses a type of nonverbal sensing of "the meaning that goes beyond words," with the emphasis on analogous perception and sudden apprehension. The two are not the same, however the question that they attempt to answer often is: for example, what is literature? What is poetry? What is the function of literature? Or what is the relationship between literature and nature? It seems that we are able to find a concentration on and response to these questions in the poetics of virtually every different culture and region.

Western poetics stresses heavily the definition of literature through the relationship between literature and the world at large (including both the private, internal world and the external world), believing that literature is a representation, that it is "A moving mirror in the roadway"[5] (realism), or "a comprehensive reflection of the private world of the soul" (romanticism), or "the exposure of the distortions of the heart and the fantasy of existence" (modernism) , or a splintered snapshot of the leveling and fragmentation of life (postmodernism), etc. From the point of view of the author, they believe that literature is "the satisfying of pent-up desires," or the author's search for "purification of the soul," or the personal "venting" or "relieving" of him/herself. In recent years, reception aesthetics has opened up a new vista with respect to the question of "what is literature." They believe that literature itself is a product of the reader experience and that the semantics, form and aesthetic potential of a work must be rediscovered and reaffirmed by continuous reading of the text by the reader and therefore, literature is also "the embodiment of certain concepts and standards of value possessed jointly by the social community." Western poetics, which concentrates on the analysis of real objects, stresses the fact that literature is a type of special linguistic form. Beginning from the Greek period, Aristotle explained what literature was by discussing the differences between the language of literature and that of oratory. Contemporary Western poetics believes even more strongly that literature is a method of dissemination that is formed by language, that it is a system of symbols that displays, stores and transmits aesthetic information. This type of language often incorporates multiple levels of additional, innovative meaning and unlike normal

[4]Tang–Song (唐宋) refers to the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) dynasties.

[5]This is a reference to a concept derived from Morris Dickstein's work, *A Mirror in the Roadway: Literature and the Real World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

language which only reveals its meaning in a connected, linear progression; it instead accomplishes its unique effect through fracturing, nonlinearity or juxtaposition. At the same time, the meaning of this type of linguistic architecture can only find full expression through cross-referencing and mutual affirmation with a large body of other text.

Chinese poetics on the whole also defines literature along the same lines of reasoning as outlined above. Chinese poetics believes that literature is the link between man and the world, In *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* Liu Xie specifically wrote the chapter "The Recondite and the Conspicuous" in order to prove this point. The form of China's poetic commentary is principally poetry itself and one important preoccupation of poetry is "to talk about poetry based on poetry," which involves explaining the meaning of poetry with reference to a mass of other texts in order to show the equivocality and variability of poetic language. The Ming and Qing commentators on fiction undertook a great number of even more meticulous and detailed studies on the aesthetic properties of the language of fiction and they all saw literature as an art which exhibits extraordinary linguistic design.

Summing up our discussion above, we are able to observe the fact that not only are the aspects that China and the West place emphasis on, along with their points of departure and mode of expression, similar, but their reasoning is also basically the same. And the poetics of other cultural regions is also the same. For example, for notions in Indian and Arabic poetics, although they are all different, nevertheless the questions that they raise and their problem solving rationale do have points of agreement. This is undoubtedly because mankind shares a common life style and a common set of experiences.

Since we share questions of common concern yet we have different viewpoints, different methodologies and irreplaceably original approaches to how to observe and interpret these questions, therefore, a convergence and dialog between Chinese and Western poetics as well as new and different advances to be achieved by both sides in the process of mutual illumination and enlightenment will certainly be absolutely imperative into the future.

We should not be afraid to acknowledge that in the past 100 years or so, China's traditional poetics has not experienced any substantive development. The achievements of China's contemporary poetics is invariably reflected in its absorption of elements of Western poetics or in a systematic rearrangement, a probing and a new interpretation of Chinese poetic theory and literary phenomena using Western poetics as a reference, or alternatively by using a new approach to tease out various important sections and elements of China's traditional poetics that have heretofore been overlooked. This without a doubt has offered Chinese poetics a new opportunity and basis for development. Zhu Guangqian, Zong Baihua, Luo Genze, Zhu Ziqing, Qian Zhongshu and others are all giants who have made important contributions in this respect. However, it cannot be denied that a fundamental question in Sino-Western comparative poetics and one which has yet to be fundamentally solved is the question of the discourse used in Sino-Western comparative poetics.

If we wish to engage and understand then we must have a discourse that both sides are able to accept and at the same time mutually interpret. Currently what the Third World is facing is a "cultural discourse" which the developed world has, over many years, formed, backed by its robust political and economic power, and which to a certain extent has already achieved broad endorsement, just as English has, to a large extent, already become the common language of communication. If the Third World cultures are to eliminate the juxtaposition of the periphery and the center, and if they are to pursue a cultural dialog with the developed world, then they must master this discourse. However, if the Third World uses exclusively the patterns and rules configured by this discourse in examining and interpreting their own native culture, then a great body of living culture that wears the hallmarks of that culture and which is innovative may be dismissed because it does not accord with the norms of this discourse. Moreover, if this were really to occur, then the dialog between the Third World and the developed world would be one discourse, one intonation, a monolog, and unless it is supplemented with some materials from other regions, it will be incapable of achieving an understanding and connection between different voices.

So, is it possible to use a totally native discourse to conduct a dialog with another culture? First of all, culture is not an unchanging "relic,, nor is it a "ready formed object," but rather it is a continual process of development and formation of "an object-in-the-making" where contemporary consciousness offers a new interpretation and imbues with new meaning the "ready formed objects" of former cultures in a never-ending temporal flow. The Former Qin, early and later Han, High Tang, Song and Ming and our present day will all have different opinions on Chinese culture and all will use the consciousness of their era to redefine Chinese culture. Today our contemporary consciousness itself has embraced a large body of Western concepts, including scientific knowledge of sound, light, chemistry and electricity, basic views of society, economics and politics, Marxism, the influence of the Soviet Union, etc. If we wished to seek out some kind of completely pure native cultural discourse that bore no relationship to the West it would be virtually impossible, not to mention unwise.

In the Sino-Western poetics dialog and engagement, if we can neither use the Western discourse, nor a "native" discourse, then how are we going to be able to extricate ourselves from this predicament? One of the strategies would appear to be to seek out an "intermediary" where a question that is shared is discussed from different angles in a dialog between equals. For example, the core question of poetics, namely "what is literature": while it is undeniable that China and the West have long probed this question, and while each side's emphasis, concrete details and mode of expression do not match exactly, nevertheless, the reasoning of both sides is largely congruent. Both sides approach the definition of "what is literature" from four aspects, namely the author, the reader, the external world and the work itself. This type of analysis of a common question from different angles is the starting point of the Sino-Western poetics dialog. Other matters such as words and meaning, ideology and expression of emotions, society and the self, objects and the self, subjectivity and objectivity, form and spirit, form and content, vacancy and

substantiveness, reality and fictionality, inheritance and progress and more, can all constitute platforms in the dialog between Chinese and Western poetics. Naturally there are some categories that are not completely homologous. For example, the concept of "form and spirit" in Chinese poetics and that of "form and content" in the West do not completely match, but this does not prevent comparative poetics from probing this area from different angles.

In conclusion, the common topics available to Chinese and Western poetics are extremely broad and this dialog has several features:

First: both sides of the dialog are approaching it from an historical point of view, from the point of view of their own cultural traditions, and not a situation where the concepts, categories and paradigm of a certain side mutilate the other. Both sides use its opposite as a reference with which to revisit and tidy up their own history. During this process of rearrangement they can both discover rules that they hold in common as well as the differences between their respective cultures. These differences can be utilized by their opposites in order to give impetus to their own further development. This is why the renowned Western scholar of comparative literature Claudio Guillen was moved to say: "Only when the poetry of two great paradigms recognize each other and reference each other, then the great theoretical controversies in literature in general can begin to find a comprehensive resolution."[6] It is also as the American sinologist James R. Hightower stated, the discovery by Western poetics of Chinese poetics can assist us in finding a new definition for literature and this definition naturally will be much more satisfying than the past literary experience of a small handful of individuals.

Secondly: because the dialog utilizes a timeline, and not merely a parallel and one dimensional comparison, the poetics dialog between China and the West has acquired a degree of historical profundity. In the past, the many centuries of Western poetics development was introduced into China over a period of a few dozen years and squeezed into a flat profile, which produced a type of "compressed biscuit effect": it was extremely difficult for each tide of thought to spread out and deepen in China. Not every tide was fully understood by China either, and in the blink of an eye it had already become "obsolete." This could not avoid producing two trends: one was a tendency to hold these "fly by night" literary trends in contempt and to barricade oneself up, while the other was a pitched pursuit of the tide, a passion for only what is new, and a preoccupation with the new vocabulary resulting in extreme superficiality. The Sino-Western poetics dialog opened up comprehensively the history of Chinese and Western poetics. The dialog can slide along the entire time axis, subject to the temporal constraints of neither new nor old concepts or be restricted by the boundaries of East or West. In this way, the "battle between China and the West" and "the contention between ancient and modern" which has waged in China's scholarly circles for more than a century can be resolved into one, realizing that "Beyond our homeland there are nine more

[6]Cited in Ye Weilian, *Bijiao shixue* (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1983), p. 7.

continents and after today there will be more eras to come."[7] In fact this is what Lu Xun imagined: "… we can, externally speaking, prevent ourselves from trailing behind the rest of the world in terms of intellectual developments while, internally speaking, remaining in touch with the pulse of our cultural heritage. This drawing on the present and revitalizing the past should serve to establish a new school of thought."[8]

Third: with history laid completely bare, the scope for mutual borrowing and adaptation between Chinese and Western poetics would be expanded greatly and the new would not necessarily be the best. It is possible that what old might is perhaps perversely in certain respects offer new inspiration. In the history of Sino-Western literature and aesthetics there is no shortage of real examples of this type of cross-distance and cross-millennial dialog and absorption. At the beginning of the 1920s, when American free verse poetry as represented by Walt Whitman was all the rage in China, nurturing a generation of romantic poets like Guo Moruo and others, ancient Chinese poetry from more than a millennium earlier was offering new opportunities to the American new poetry movement. The most influential figure in the modernist movement, Ezra Pound, pointed out that Chinese poetry "Is a treasure house from which, a century from now, we will seek an impetus, just as the Renaissance sought impetus from the Greeks."[9] In the 1930s, when the stage play format which was transplanted from the West and developed to its zenith in China thanks to the hard work of people like Cao Yu, the great German dramatist Bertolt Brecht was touched by the influence of classical Chinese opera and Mei Lanfang's acting skills and wrote such important treatises as *On the Traditional Drama of the Chinese People* and *The Alienation Effect* [Verfremdungseffekt] *in the Art of Chinese Dramatic Acting*, pointing out his theories of "distancing" and "unfamiliarization" amongst others, and significantly changed the direction of the development of the European stage. Apart from this, the 18th century French "*Chinoiserie*" vogue, and the 20th century American humanists' (as represented by Irving Babbitt) acknowledgment of China's Confucianism, etc. are all good examples.

The Sino-Western poetics dialog is a product of the age and is an inevitable result of the current period of cultural transformation. During the time when culture developed in isolation, this type of dialog could not have been imagined, but now, lateral connections have far transcended any vertical constraints, and lateral [横向的], same-era multiregional cultural similarities are consistently no weaker than the differences delivered by historical development internally within cultures of different regions. I suspect that, in terms of ideology, taste and preoccupation, contemporary Chinese youth have much more in common with their contemporary

[7]Chen Yinke, "Wang Jingan xiansheng yishu xu," *Jinmingguan conggao*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), p. 220.

[8]Lu Xun, "Wenhua pianzhi lun," *Lu Xun quanji*, vol. 1, p. 192. Translation taken from: Kowallis *Concerning Imbalanced Cultural Development.*

[9]Cited in Zhao Yiheng, *Yuanyou de shishen* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1984), p. 11.

counterparts in the West than they do with those of the Ming and Qing (not to mention the Tang or Song). This is undoubtedly a reality that can be accepted. Currently, the lateral expansion of the culture of the various regions that is occurring, in terms of depth and breadth, far outstrips the experience of any such occurrence in the past. This is because modern man, with the exception of extremely remote areas, has consistently grown up in an environment of international exchange. The initial exploration of knowledge has entered an era where the same method has been adopted in the primary and secondary education systems across the world and subsequently has been subject to the corrupting influence of the inescapable motion picture and television broadcast networks. These conditions were never experienced in any era in the past and they offer a real basis for a dialog and mutual understanding between different cultural systems.

Finally, we need to mention that dialog itself is an extremely complex concept. It incorporates many levels and pluralistic understandings. An equal dialog does not exclude the occasional instance where the system of a certain side undertakes an integration of a certain theory or of returning together along a different path or undertaking a new synthetic system reconstruction based on a different cultural paradigm. It at times is concerned with reflecting on matters of great import while at others it merely involves an exchange of opinions on narrow mundane principles. As part of the dialog, one side may make a suggestion in order to facilitate the opening up of the discussion. It only needs to be a topic that has a rich inspirational potential and something on which both sides are able to make a contribution; it is not important who has raised it. Narrow, pretentious arrogance or self-centeredness is the arch enemy of equal dialog, no matter from which side it emanates.

In sum, the contemporary meaning of poetics refers to theoretical research on literature itself which is unfolding at an abstract level. It differs from literary criticism in that it does not document the success or failure of specific works. It also differs from literary history in that it does not attempt an historical evaluation of a work. What it studies is the modes and formulae of literary texts and how literary meaning (literary essence or literariness) is produced using these modes and formulae. It ought rightly to provide a complete package which is capable of describing the common characteristics and differences between all works and the principles and methodology for ascertaining its historical significance. Poetics is not a discipline that merely analyses experience. Its aim is not merely to sum up literary experience, nor to summarize the evolution of literature in the past. Rather, it is to, on this foundation, study its potential abstract styles and to attempt to show how these styles determine the production and expression of literary texts. This is a theoretical science which on the one hand consolidates all knowledge of literature and inserts this into the theoretical matrix which is formed by the theories of such fields as contemporary philosophy, linguistics, semiotics, aesthetics and communication studies, while on the other, it broadly utilizes the new results that these theories have achieved. It not only studies the content of a certain literary history that literature reflects, but more importantly, it examines how specific historical cultural content is reflected in works of art, or in other words, how it is given form. Here what is important is how form operates, including what form it takes, how its

skills are employed and transformed and, in different eras and in different cultural paradigms, the different modes and formulae that are produced by cultural meaning.

The question that contemporary poetics faces if it is to progress further is how to summarize the experience and theories accumulated over many years by all of the ethnic cultures around the world and from different angles solve the questions encountered by mankind in the field of literature. In the process of poetic interaction, proximity, debate and fusion between the various ethnic groups, there is no doubt that new concepts, new fields and new propositions will be forged. And these new concepts, fields and propositions will not only, based on a foundation of East–West amalgam and continuity between the ancient and modern, will enable poetics as a discipline of theoretical science to enter a new phase that is truly international and modern, and through a process of mutual contrast, also aid in revealing the real face, value and spirit of the poetics of all ethnic groups.

Chapter 27
Cultural Difference and Cultural Misunderstanding

"The reason there is a difference between objects is because of their different sensibilities." The history of mankind proves that no matter how many have tried to undertake cultural annexation, subjugation or fusion, cultural difference has always remained. Throughout history there have been three different attitudes for dealing with these differences.

The first is to brand as a heretic anyone who differs from one's own culture, or to term them "uncivilized savages" (in Western Europe), or to treat them the same as bestial "barbarians"[1] (in China). They must be subdued, made to conform or mercifully exterminated. At the time the whites were occupying South and North America, the ancient Chinese were assuming this type of attitude towards the ethnic minorities on their periphery.

The second is to recognize its value, but only as a rare artifact or novel adornment, or alternatively as an historical relic that can be offered up for study. In reality this is to reject its application in real life, drain it of life, and worship its empty shell. Today, all around the world, generally speaking Egypt's brilliant cultural relics can all be seen. But where is the Egyptian culture that is influencing real life? A few decades ago, Chinese culture was in danger of suffering the same fate. If we were to confuse the difference between the stereotypical "traditional culture" which had already become a relic (no matter how glorious it may have been) with the ever changing "cultural tradition" which interprets the "traditional culture" (this type of "cultural tradition" is currently continuing to be born and progress and is contemporary man's interpretation of the culture of the past and belongs to the present), or if we "return to the past" as a substitute for new birth and counteract the modernization of Chinese culture by idolizing it, then the contemporary fate of Egyptian culture will be tomorrow's fate of Chinese culture!

The third attitude is one of cultural relativism. This refers to the practice of placing an object in its own cultural context and studying it. It celebrates the pluralistic coexistence of different cultures, opposes the use of a value concept

[1] *Manyi* (蛮夷) is the traditional common term for non–Han people.

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which originates in a certain cultural context to judge a different cultural system, acknowledges that all cultures, no matter how special, all possess their own logic and existing value and that all should be accorded respect. This type of attitude is obviously much more tolerant and fair than the former two attitudes, but we must probe further: are there any things in the thousands upon thousands of different cultures that are commonly acknowledged? In the cacophony of multiculturalism is it still possible that certain common rules can emerge, a certain type of "common reason" or "standard of truth"? On the cusp of the twenty-first century, are different cultures gradually merging or are they increasingly stressing their differences and so becoming mutually estranged? Is mankind capable of transcending cultural ethno-centrism and reaching an alternative, higher plane, or will mankind, perhaps, develop to a certain stage where the differences between various groups within one cultural system are more pronounced than the differences between different cultural systems? For example, might not the difference between the common and elite cultures of a given cultural system outstrip the differences between different cultures? These are all questions which cultural relativism faces and which they must answer.

But, no matter what the case, cultural difference remains a commonly existing reality in the current period. And it is these differences that bestow on human culture its diversity. History has already proven that Chinese culture has the capacity to conserve itself and not be "assimilated." In the process of global modernization, Chinese cultural renewal has its own culturally unique differences from the mode of renewal in other cultures. The so-called mutual assimilation, fusion and integration of world culture are bound to lead to an enervation and decline of human culture.

In fact, it is precisely because differences exist that it is possible for different cultures to absorb from each other and learn from each other's experiences and in the process of mutual consultation, further develop themselves. The study of the "difference" between cultures has always been a topic of fascination. In the eighteenth century, the Western concept of "difference" only referred to foreign countries and other climes. In other words, strange times and spaces far from one's native soil, a place that brimmed with mysterious "alien overtones." Following the development of transport and communication, this type of "alien world" became ever smaller and now very few regions still possess this mysterious "alien" fascination. In his conversation with Eckermann, Goethe stresses the fact that like the Germans, Chinese are also human beings and as far as he is concerned, China is no longer a mysterious "alien land," but rather a type of metaphor, and just like the "Chinese garden" that he created, it embodies his ideal utopia. By the time we arrive at the present society, the functionality of the alien land as a utopia has gradually diminished and people have honestly recognized the differences between different cultures and used the concept of the "alien land" to help them discover their own "other." Only when one examines oneself from an external point of view, from the point of view of an alien culture, are we able to see many things that are hidden within. For example, after reading Spinoza's treatise on pantheism, Guo Moruo stated: "When I was in middle school, I liked to read *Zhuangzi*, but I only

liked the vastness and unbridled nature of the passages, which is where the meaning contained is profound and abstruse. As soon as [I was able to] verify it against foreign philosophies. I was immediately able to make sense of it."[2] This is the phenomenon of enlightenment which occurs when one looks back on one's native culture from the culture of an alien land.

Regarding the differences between cultures, when two types of cultures meet, it is impossible to avoid misreadings. Misreading refers to the phenomenon of using one's own cultural traditions, modes of thinking and everything that one is familiar with to interpret another culture. Normally, people are only able to view the world via their own mode of thinking. Their original field of vision determines what they "fail to see" and what they "do see," and determines what they will choose or excise from another culture and thus also determine how they will recognize and interpret that culture. As the fable goes, once a frog planned to tell his good friend—a fish which in no way could leave his watery home—about the scenes of the world of dry land. The fish understood a "bird" to be one of his own kinds which had grown wings and flew, and by "cart" he could only understand it as a fish which had grown four wheels out of its abdomen. He could only recognize this world according to his own mode of thinking. Thus, we cannot demand that foreigners understand Chinese culture as "fundamentally" as a Chinese, nor can we expect a Chinese to understand a foreign culture in the same way that a foreigner does. Even less should we dismiss any misreadings as "a failure to understand," "distortion," or "a lack of tolerance." In fact, in the process of cultural development, misreading frequently plays a promoting role. If a work of literature had only one mode of interpretation then it would never give rise to misreading and thus it would cease to have any life force. For example *A Dream of Red Mansions* has been interpreted as a work of court intrigue, an author's autobiography, a work on emptiness, class struggle, a history of sexuality, a vehicle for transmitting the Buddhist teachings, and more. This proves precisely that the work has an inexhaustible vitality. Some works fall silent for many years, and then suddenly burst into life because suddenly they are subject to a different interpretation. And none of these different interpretations, obviously, can be free of misreadings to a certain extent.

Since this is the situation with regards the interpretation of different cultural phenomena in different eras, therefore the interpretation of writings or works of art between different cultural paradigms is even more so. Take Mao Dun's misreading of Nietzsche as an example. Mao Dun has his own personal unique view on many of Nietzsche's doctrines. As a member of the great German Empire, Nietzsche stressed the fact that "the quest for power" obviously refers to occupation and subjugation, and as a member of a weak state, Mao Dun interpreted the term from the point of view of anti-occupation and anti-subjugation. This type of misreading obviously on the one hand enriches the subject's culture, while on the other hand it expands the applicable range and method of interpretation of the alternative culture from a completely different angle. When discussing China's May Fourth new

[2]Guo Moruo, "Chuangzao shinian," in *Moruo wenji*, vol. 7, p. 59.

culture movement, we obviously cannot avoid discussing Nietzsche, and when we discuss and assess the thought of Nietzsche comprehensively, if we overlook his influence on the Third World and the circumstances under which he has been interpreted, then such a study of Nietzsche is incomplete. Naturally, not all cultural misreadings are capable of having a positive effect. On the contrary, at times misreadings can have relatively serious and tragic repercussions.

In sum, given the pending arrival of the global information society, contact between the many different cultural systems will become more and more frequent and East–West cultural exchange will in the twenty-first century enter a completely new era. In the process of what will be an extremely complex and regular exchange, how we deal with questions of cultural difference and cultural misreading will certainly in the future attract greater attention and is a question that deserves even deeper discussion.

Chapter 28
Misreadings in the Search for Commonality Between Chinese and Western Culture

The "Unicorn" is an animal from Western mythology. It resembles a horse or a small goat but on its forehead it has a beautiful horn. This image made its earliest appearance in Mesopotamian drawings. Later, it consistently acted in the West as a symbol of good fortune and perfection. Meanwhile, the image of the dragon is closely tied to Chinese culture and it symbolizes power and a mighty imperial state located "at the center." In June of 1993, the Research Institute of Comparative Literature and Culture at Peking University in conjunction with the European Transcultural Research Institute jointly hosted an international academic conference, the theme of which was "The unicorn and the dragon—on identifying misreadings in a ubiquitous China–Western culture." The so-called "misreading" refers to the fact that when people from one culture come into contact with another culture, they find great difficulty in casting aside their own cultural traditions and modes of thinking and invariably understand others according to everything that they themselves are familiar with. As one fable describes it: once a frog planned to tell his good friend—a fish which in no way could leave his watery home—about the scenes of the world of dry land. The fish understood a "bird" to be one of his own kinds which had grown wings and flew, and by "cart" he could only understand it as a fish which had grown four wheels out of its abdomen. He could only recognize this world according to his own mode of thinking. When people are trying to understand another culture, they will naturally first make choices, excisions and finally interpretations according to their own familiar mode of thinking. This inevitably produces unavoidable misreadings between cultures. And how these "misreadings" are dealt with depends, according to different eras and backgrounds, on the different attitudes that people adopt. The first attitude is to categorically denounce as heretical any culture that is different from your own—or to call them uncivilized savages or perhaps beast-like barbarians. The second attitude is to acknowledge their value but only as a rare artifact, novel adornment, or as an historic relic. The third attitude is comparatively fair and tolerant and uses a standpoint of cultural relativity and acknowledges that all cultures, no matter how special, all possess their own logic and existing value. If we examine this a little

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more closely, is it possible that in the myriad of differences in human culture there are things that are commonly accepted? Is it possible that there exists a common standard of judgment? On the cusp of the twenty-first century, are different cultures gradually merging or are they increasingly stressing their differences and so becoming mutually estranged? Is mankind capable of transcending his own culture and civilization and reaching an alternative, higher plane and becoming the "new humanity" that many nations are currently debating? Because of the pending arrival of the global information society, because of the spiritual introspection of the Western developed world, and because of the rapid expansion of Eastern societies, these questions, and the new demands raised in terms of ideology and culture, are becoming even more pressing and intense.

It is precisely because of this situation that a section of Europe's scholars have developed an unusual interest in understanding African, Asian and especially Chinese culture. The European Transcultural Research Institute, which received the support of the European Union as well as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was established on this type of foundation. The president of the European International Transcultural Institute, and anthropologist, Professor Alain Le Pichon, can be said to have spared no effort in connecting Chinese and Western culture. In the summer of 1993, in response to the urging of the eminent European cultural theorist and novelist Umberto Eco, he organized the three week long "Joint investigation on silk road culture." The expedition began from Guangzhou and passed through Xi'an, Dunhuang, and Turfan, and finally reached the Great Wall near Beijing. On the way it investigated ancient Chinese culture and its majestic dynasties, along with the fate of externally originating religions in the native Chinese cultural ecology, the dialog between the cultures of the Western region (Persia, Central Asia) and India with the Han culture. It also addressed the question of openness as symbolized by the Silk Road and insularity as symbolized by the Great Wall along with the historical changes of China's current opening up and modernization, etc. Beijing was the last stop of the inspection program and also the destination where the group spent the most time.

The International Transcultural Institute in conjunction with Peking University's Research Institute of Comparative Literature and Culture convened a very unique conference which addressed the question of "Cultural Dialog and Cultural Misreading." Although the number of attendees at the conference was not great, apart from the aforementioned scholars Professors Umberto Eco and Alain Le Pichon from Europe, there was also the President of the Paris Institute of Italian Culture and Professor of cultural anthropology Paolo Fabbri, Head of the French Pasteur Institute and Professor of Biology Antoine Danchin, French Social Sciences Advanced Research Institute researcher Jacques Le Goff, the editor-in-chief at the French dictionary publisher Dictionaries Le Robert Dr. Alain Rey, along with Columbia University's Professor Furio Colombo, and Shigemi Inaga, Professor of Art History at Japan's Mie University, amongst others. Attendees on the Chinese side included Yue Daiyun, Meng Hua, and Chen Yuehong from Peking University's Institute of Comparative Literature and Culture, Tang Yijie from the Philosophy Department, Luo Peng from the Western Languages Department, the

Sociology Department's Zhou Xing, the Research Center for Science and Social Development's , from the China Academy of Social Sciences' Foreign Literature Research Center Guo Hongan, and from the Philosophy Research Center Teng Shouyao and Sun Shangtang. Also participating were the French trained economics PhD Ding Yifan, the former head of the Ministry of Culture and renowned author Wang Meng and the famous scholar of French literature and author Shen Dali. From the above list of attendees it can be seen that this international conference was indeed a successful and groundbreaking intercultural and interdisciplinary cultural research conference.

The convening of this conference was also groundbreaking since from the outset, as they prepared for the conference, both sides specifically stressed that the primary aim of the conference was to enable attendees to exchange points of view freely, that they be able to address certain questions through dialog and neither by reading papers nor coming to any conclusions. In order to avoid not having access to the attendees arguments until the conference itself and so not offering enough time for preparation and making it difficult to have a good debate, the outlines of the papers of the attendees were distributed to all participants only one month before the conference. This assisted everyone in thinking over matters and also helped the conference organizers to plan the focus of the discussion. Overall, everyone was relatively satisfied with the discussion at the conference and the papers were all delivered passionately and there were no awkward silences. Some debates over differently held views were even continued after the conference. Naturally all of this is just a beginning and because of the estrangement of language and terminology, everybody could not help but feel that there was "unfinished business" and that they should meet up again.

The last item on the program, the "Celebration on the Great Wall" was also a rousing success. The Chinese and foreign scholars chatted enthusiastically atop the ancient Wall about the different relationships between walls, gates, windows and roads. The author Wang Meng and the French academician Jacques Le Goff delivered extremely brilliant concluding remarks. The research students of the Institute of Comparative Literature and Culture along with those from the French department of the Western Languages Faculty performed some cultural items at the foot of the Great Wall that had a strong Chinese flavor. Finally, Italy's Professor Umberto Eco led us all in an enthusiastic dance. On the way back from the Great Wall, Chinese, French and Italian songs, classical and modern, filled the air, and everyone was left with an indelible impression.

The articles collected here into this volume are mostly the papers delivered at the conference by the participants which were subsequently worked on further after the conference. Additionally, some of the articles are the record of speeches given by these same group of scholars at a roundtable conference convened by the Culture Department of the Italian Embassy which coincided with this international conference entitled "Modern thought in post-industrialized Europe and contemporary China," and I am delighted to have the permission of the Cultural Attaché of the Italian Embassy to publish them here and to express our appreciation.

One concrete result of this conference is the announcement of the establishment of the organizing committee of the Beijing branch of the University Without Walls which is jointly organized by the European Transcultural Research Institute and the Academy of Chinese Culture, the China International Educational Exchange Center and the Comparative Literature and Culture Research Institute of Peking University. This measure guarantees the continued development into the future of the cultural exchange between the European Transcultural Research Institute and us. Therefore, the proposal and response regarding the University Without Walls are attached as an appendix here.

Finally, we must thank the French Transcultural Research Institute and the Academy of Chinese Culture for their financial assistance in enabling the publication of this book. Our old friend Mr. Zhang Wending, the deputy general editor of Peking University Press, also contributed greatly towards the publication. I would like here to express my sincere thanks to all involved.

Chapter 29
"Death of a Discipline" and the Birth of a Discipline

At the end of last century, the cries, with respect to comparative literature, of "the death of the discipline" were at fever pitch. In recent years these cries have seen significant moderation. The reason why in the past there was an emphasis on "the death of the discipline" was threefold: the first was that "feminist research, post-colonial theory and cultural research and other cross-cultural research had completely changed the face of literary research" and because of this, comparative literature in its original sense was no more. The second was an excessive stress on the "prescriptive nature" of comparative literature. In other words, "the method of excessively limiting the object of research" virtually extinguished the prospect for the development of comparative literature, and the most important reason for this was, of course, the suggestion by Spivak and others that globalization has forced people to accept a common value system and an omnipresent system of exchange and the early modes of comparative literature that the colonial powers who advocate unitarianism once promoted has long since lost its capacity to develop.[1]

Today, a number of scholars of comparative literature have changed their views. The earliest person to announce the "death of the discipline," Susan Bassnett,[2] confessed at the time that it was to announce the death of comparative literature and also to raise the profile of translation research, but looking back at that suggestion today, it appeared to be basically flawed. The author of *Death of a Discipline*, Gayatri Spivak, on the other hand, emphasized that the "polyphonic view" is the nucleus of postcolonial ideology and that if comparative literature were to reject its Eurocentric roots and not be subject to the control of global exchange which is determined by international commerce, then it would be able to develop further and to form a new discipline. In order to offer comparative literature the opportunity for renovation and development, many scholars put forward many constructive suggestions. For example Spivak suggested that the new comparative literature needed

[1]Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
[2]Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

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to "overturn and destroy" the "misappropriation" of the newly independent cultures by the more powerful cultures. In other words, it needs to transcend Western literature and society and "reposition itself in a planetary context." Haun Saussy, in his *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, which he drafted for the American Comparative Literature Association, points out that the future strategy for the development of comparative literature is a return to a study of "literariness," to revisit the concept and return to a study of literature which is imbued with new meaning and a new understanding.[3] The Brazilian author and theoretician, Oswald de Andrade, argued that the rejection by comparative literature of a "unitarian meaning" signifies the fact that to maintain the many voices and pluralistic cultural space of Brazil, we must finally liberate ourselves from spiritual colonialism. Bassnett, meanwhile, expressed the wish that scholars of comparative literature should cast aside their completely pointless argumentation over terminology and definition. She believed that the future of comparative literature lay in rejecting any prescriptive methodology that would limit the object of research and to focus on the broadest possible literary concepts, and study the text itself, outline the intercultural and cross-space-time boundaries of the writing and reading histories of texts and recognize the inevitable mutual relationships that the circulation of literature involves.

In reality, this new development in Western comparative literature appears to be a good fit with the reflections of China's scholars of comparative literature on the third developmental stage of comparative literature. Several years previously, we advocated a third stage of development for comparative literature, pointing out that the birth of Chinese comparative literature was closely tied to the transition of Chinese society and Chinese literature from a traditional state to a modern state and that from its very beginning, it occurred in the space between two completely heterogeneous Eastern and Western cultures, transcended regional boundaries and was possessed of a more expansive view of world literature. Over the years, we have consistently seen "cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary literary research" as the most fundamental nature and scope of the discipline of comparative literature and stressed the importance of the historical dimension of research, advocating for thoroughgoing literary research in a spatial and temporal context—or in other words both ancient and modern, China and the rest of the world. In fact, as a developing country, China could never unilaterally become a cultural imperialist hegemon, but rather it steadfastly commits itself to promoting the development of multiculturalism, working hard to create a pluralist globalized community. China is blessed with an exceptionally long cultural history and a rich cultural legacy which offers an inexhaustible source for literary research between different cultures. For a long time, China has had cultural exchange with India, Japan and Persia, amongst others, and over the past century the Chinese people have diligently learned from foreign cultures and languages, which have led to a situation where Chinese

[3]Haun Saussy, ed. *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

people's knowledge of foreign countries far outstrips the knowledge that ordinary foreigners possess of China. This enables Chinese comparative literature to position itself in the front ranks of the establishment of the third phase of comparative literature in literary research spanning different cultures.

Looking back on the document "Reflections on Comparative Literature in the 21st Century,"[4] the author along with Western comparative literature circles of the day raised a number of questions which are worthy of reflection and discussion. For example, there appears to be some sort of a contradiction in what Bassnett and Spivak have to say. Spivak believes that the new comparative literature needs to "overturn and destroy" the "misappropriation" of the newly independent cultures by the more powerful cultures. In other words, it needs to "transcend Western literature and society and reposition itself in a planetary context." Bassnett, on the other hand, believes that "the traditional Western cultural influence continues to unavoidably permeate the writing of all contemporary figures" and that the European classics can never be "overturned and destroyed" and that "the fundamental question that comparative literature needs to set about solving" is in fact to "pay attention to the impact and position of classic and groundbreaking texts outside Europe and North America." She accuses Spivak's proposal of being too "political" and that contemporary comparative literature's "core question is both political and esthetic." From the point of view of China's comparative literature, we both oppose the domination and appropriation of newly independent cultures by the dominant cultures, as well as opposing any "overturning and destruction" which might be directed towards traditional European classics. We accept that both are equally important and that the demise of any culture or literature is a great loss to humankind. What we wish to do is to promote a dialog between the two and that the mutual recognition, complementarity and interaction generated by this dialog is not an "assimilation" or "fusion," nor is it a "merging together," but rather it is a drawing of the best out of each other, allowing the original unique features of each side to develop to new heights and thus enrich global multiculturalism. This will be the new era of comparative literature development and is at the same time the third stage of development of comparative literature that we have been anticipating.

In fact, Spivak's response to her own advocacy that comparative literature in the future should "transcend Western literature and society and reposition itself in a planetary context" also lacks conviction. She argues that comparative literature, this "declining discipline," currently "is still but the precursor to a future explicit discipline," a "potential" discipline, one that "could form" in the future.[5] In other words, a discipline at present does not exist. This obviously does not gel with reality, nor does it accord with logic, because all "Things becoming" can only be born of "Things become." Without an "already formed object" (Things become), on what foundation could a "thing of the future" (Things becoming) possibly take

[4] *Comparative Critical Studies* 3.1–2 (2006) 3–11.

[5] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 6.

shape and be reborn? The comparative literature that has been severed has been developing for more than two centuries and the new comparative literature cannot just appear out of a void. Even the first to declare that "comparative literature as a discipline has already run its course," Susan Bassnett, could not but concede that although this discipline might have been "already in decline" in its place of origin, nevertheless "in other regions, comparative literature is flourishing," and the function and place of classic and groundbreaking European texts that she was at such pains to concern herself with, outside Europe and North America are enjoying an infinitely higher evaluation in former colonial and imperialist countries. Bassnett ultimately could not but recognize that comparative literature exists as a "truly robust research area." And to deny this existence is obviously unwise.

It should be said that some of the ideas that Bassnett raised in "Reflections on Comparative Literature in the 21st Century" are extremely creative and deserve consultation and consideration by China's comparative literature practitioners. Especially the following four points: 1. She raises again what Croce had said about comparative literature research needing to be "encompassed in all its relationships, disposed in the composite whole of universal literary history… seen in those connections and preparations that are its *raison d'être.*"[6] Bassnett went even further and pointed out that what comparative literature attempted to study was not only the actual historical moment when a text was created, but it should also be understood as a history of how a text has been accepted transcending space and time. 2. She especially stressed the significance of the reader for comparative literature, arguing that to give the discipline meaning and to suggest a genuinely innovative methodology for studying literature, then the role of the reader needs to be given prominence, the reading process itself should be compared, and advance limits should not be set nor certain text be specially selected before undertaking a comparison. This will fundamentally change people's reading experience and at the same time alter the whole concept of comparison. Therefore, comparative literature exists in both the research of different scholars on the same topic and more importantly, it still exists in the reader experience, and true comparison stems from placing different works side by side, studying the reader's reaction to this juxtaposition and in an historical context, analyzing the texts. 3. She repeatedly stressed that the core question of comparative literature is both political and esthetic and stressed the special significance of comparative literature returning to the study of "literariness." 4. She also suggested that a common global discourse would be beneficial to scholars of comparative literature. The patterns of exchange and transformation in the literary and philosophical movements can be compared with the pattern of transformation in the global information flow, and that cultural capital and the theory of its transmission is an extremely valuable method of comparison, etc. These all warrant our earnest reflection and study.

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[6]Croce, Benedetto, *La Letteratura Comparata* (1903) in Hans–Joachim Schulz and Phillip H. Rhein. *Comparative Literature: The Early Years* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), p. 222.

In conclusion, to sincerely reflect on and study the useful and innovative suggestions that different groups from different regions have raised is a tradition that Chinese comparative literature has adopted in the century since it was first established, and is also the fundamental reason why it has achieved such rapid progress. In the past 100 years, China's comparative literature has borrowed the empirical study model on dissemination and influence by the French school and also received the nurturing of the parallel research and cross-disciplinary research of the American school. This at once summed up the experience of our forebears and at the same time broke through the constriction of the West-centrism of both the French and American comparative literatures and allowed the rails of comparative literature and interdisciplinarity to truly work towards linking up Eastern and Western literatures and academic culture and with the comparative literatures of all regions in the world to jointly complete the historic mission of the construction of the third developmental stage of world comparative literature.

Chapter 30
Escaping the Trap of Modernity

Postmodernism which rose to prominence in the 1960s noted in relation to the defects of modernism: there is not only one way to view the world but rather there are many. Every individual life and ideology are a narrative mode and each has its own authenticity. Nor is there simply one ideal, but rather there are many, each with its own value, and the formidable power of cyberspace greatly strengthens the mode of thinking and actions of post-modernism. Postmodernists immersed themselves in a struggle to root out the foundation of the ideology of modernity. The modern deconstruction movement that they mobilized has already had the effect of eclipsing all unilateral thinking based on power and compulsion, and at the same time causing everything to become fragmented and superficial and finally leaving behind a scattering of modernist thought and a noisily clamoring splintered world in which everyone's story is just as convincing as the next and just as valid and equally deserving of acknowledgement. Postmodernists have razed the ramparts of the modernists to the ground; however they have not offered a blueprint for life going forward. In a world where there are no boundaries, and is full of chaos and disorder and is collapsing and falling apart, people have become wandering existentialist tribes, wandering around in a desperate search, vaguely thirsting for something to savor, something worth believing in, but also not understanding what that might be. Despite the fact that man's spirit has freed itself of its old ideological fetters, nevertheless everyone is forced to search for their own path alone. Although late twentieth century postmodernism planned to smash all architectures of authority, still it did not suggest any new blueprints, nor did it plot out a new era. It merely analyzed all of the defects in modernity and exposed and comprehensively smashed the grand narrative of modernism. By the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, some scholars proposed a marriage between the achievements of the first Enlightenment and postmodernism, calling for "A second Enlightenment", raising again the flag of new humanism, with the aim of escaping from the trap of modernity.

On the relationship of man and nature, they advocated transcending homo-centrism and elevating ecological consciousness and believed that "Man is but one species in a cast of thousands. He is no better or worse than any other. He has his place in the

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ecological system and he only has value in so far as he contributes towards that ecological system." The famous ecologist Thomas Berry believes that man is the center of the universe, and that it is man's sacred duty to be concerned about nature. This is as Zhu Xi stated: "Heaven is man and man is Heaven. Man is born of Heaven, and once born, Heaven is within him." Only through free creation, and through "men" who, like "Heaven/nature," are replete with adequate pragmatic autonomy, will the vivacious ambience of "Heaven/nature" be expressed. Jeremy Rifkin also believes that Asians have always stressed the harmony between man and nature. If we say that the foundation of the West's Enlightenment science was to "remodel nature," to mold it to man's likeness, then the East's method is to reject any notion that man can manipulate his environment and instead, to regulate oneself according to the basic needs of his environment.

On the relationship between one culture and others, they place huge store in the consciousness of cultural complementarity and believe that if we say that the catch-cry of the first Enlightenment was "the liberation of the self", then that of the second Enlightenment is to respect others and to respect difference. Multicultural complementarity, especially the complementarity of the Eastern and Western cultures, is an important component of the new humanism. As Rifkin said, running through the two modern day spiritual trends is: first, in an increasingly materialistic world, a thirst for some kind of higher individual calling; second, in a steadily alienating and indifferent society, a need to search for some kind of common consciousness. He believes that this is the common quest of perceptive individuals in both Europe and China. To his mind, both Europe and China are dreaming of a completely new era, an era in which the rights of all people are respected, where cultural differences are welcomed, where everyone on the planet is able to enjoy an even higher quality of life in a sustainable environment (not an extravagant lifestyle), and that mankind is able to live in peace and harmony. In order to survive together in an increasingly closely connected world, mankind must constantly develop new concepts, and on this point China and Europe will certainly find more and deeper things in common.

On this foundation, they advocated the rejection of an abstract concept of freedom and a move toward a responsible and profound freedom. The post-modernist thinker Alfred North Whitehead believes that man is a product of society, and when the individual uses his personal freedom to impair the common fabric of society, the result is that he will certainly also impair himself. The new humanist spirit inserts responsibility and duty into the concept of freedom and shows how freedom and duty are internally linked. At the end of the 20th century, in the French town of Lille, the World Citizens Assembly called for another Citizen's Treaty to be concluded, one separate from the United Nations Treaty and the Treaty for Human Rights, and that would be a World Treaty of Responsibility.

They also went further and advocated for the transcendence of mechanical reason and a call for aesthetic intelligence because mechanical reason renders it difficult for people to cast aside action and motivations with a utilitarian purpose. Esthetic intelligence is a type of integrated thinking which is built on a foundation of organically connected concepts and which takes the harmony and unity of truth,

goodness and beauty as its purpose. Here, scientific, rational, emotional, religious, and artistic thinking are all able to find mutual complementarity and mutual enrichment. Under the influence of the binary opposition mode of thinking, modernist reason is predicated on the rejection of the value and beauty of sentiment and emotion, whereas esthetic intelligence stresses a harmonious mode of thinking. Whitehead states that both the Chinese and Greek people achieved a certain level of civilized perfection and both deserve to be applauded. However, whilst their achievements may be admirable, they cannot be duplicated ad infinitum. If a civilization wishes to maintain itself with its original passion, then what it requires is more than scholarship. It cannot get by without a spirit of daring. And this so-called spirit of daring is the pursuit of new perfection.

In the final analysis, the world is undergoing rapid change and according to the predictions of science, this change is "exponential." In other words, the speed of change will gradually increase. From the Qin-Han to the beginning of the Republican period, social change in China was not great, however having entered the twentieth century, the change has been increasingly astonishing and remarkable. All exponential processes of physics lead to the collapse of systems and presage their demise. If we agree that this inference is basically true, then how should mankind approach the course of society that is speeding up by the day, and how should we respond to the tremendous life changes as we approach the turn of the century? Since Western Enlightenment science's attempt to "remodel" nature, and the method of making it accord with the features of man have been proven to have failed, then adopting the Eastern methodology, abandoning any notion that man is able to control his environment and once again adjust himself according to the demands of his environment, can perhaps still be considered a feasible option. This means that we first of all need to escape from the trap of modernity, change our view of life and of the world, and rebuild mankind's spiritual world.

Chapter 31
Will "Sino-Centrism" Succeed "Eurocentrism"?

"Eurocentrism" is currently gradually disappearing, so will "Sino-centrism" follow? Will the prediction that "The 21st Century is China's Century" that certain people espouse actually eventuate? Our response is in the negative. Times have changed and the history of one culture subjugating and eclipsing other cultures is already gone forever. The world of the future will be a world where multiple cultures interact, flourish, and thrive together.

Currently, many Western scholars are reflecting on the course of the progress of their culture, anxious to absorb useful resources from other cultures. Recently, the French scholar Léon Vandermeersch pointed out at China's "Five Canons" Research and Translation Conference that the Western humanist human rights ideology was once seen as perfect, however, now Western humanism is facing a post-modern challenge and to date scholars have been unable to suggest a proper response. He believes that we should diligently consider the universal values implicit in all cultures, such as China's cultural respect for nature as encapsulated by the notion of the "Union between Heaven and man", or the rejection of religion's universalism as represented by the phrase "far from God but close to man" and the spirit of universal love as represented by the phrase "all men are brothers", and others are all of assistance in solving the problems that exist in the world today. The contemporary American Sinologist Roger T. Ames and others believe: "What we need to do is not only study China's traditions, but more importantly, we should devise ways whereby it can become a cultural resource which can enrich and reform our world. The Confucians defined 'man' from a social angle. Might this not be able to revise and strengthen the Western liberal model? In a society that is constructed around 'propriety', might we not discover some resources that we might utilize in order to assist us to better understand the philosophical concept of human rights which is fundamentally inadequate but which has rich practical value?" Another group of Western scholars, meanwhile, have applied themselves to a renewed reflection on their own cultural roots in the light of Chinese culture (the other). For example, France's Professor François Jullien wrote an article entitled

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"Why We Westerners Cannot Avoid China When Studying Philosophy" in which he stressed: "We choose to embark. In other words, we choose to leave in order to create a space for extended contemplation. People have navigated China in order to read Greece better: we have a certain inherent familiarity with Greek thought and so we have no choice but to sever that familiarity and construct a type of external viewpoint (to facilitate a new contemplation). Chinese culture represents, for Europe, the most obvious externality, and both its longevity and its development can help we Europeans cast aside our own ethnocentrism." In this kind of context, the study of Chinese classics has attracted the attention of many scholars. In 2008, the Dutch sinologist, Professor Kristofer Schipper initially pointed out that the Christian *Bible*, the Islamic *Koran*, and India's *Vedas*, amongst others, have all been translated in their entirety into a multitude of languages and editions, yet China's *Five Classics* have rarely been translated into multiple languages and editions, and no complete edition of the *Five Classics*, in particular, is available to readers. In 2009, with the support of the state, some 12 countries participated in an initiative to publish the *Five Classics* in some eight languages.

All of this corroborates a statement by Karl Theodor Jaspers which reads: "*Until today* mankind has lived by what happened during the Axial Period, by what was thought and created during that period. In each new upward flight it returns in recollection to this period and is fired anew by it. Ever since then it has been the case that recollections and reawakenings of the potentialities of the Axial Period—renaissances—afford a spiritual impetus. Return to this beginning is the ever-recurrent event in China, India and the West."[1] The abovementioned Western scholars' deep commitment to reacquainting themselves with Chinese culture truly demonstrates a type of renaissance of spiritual power, the aim of which is a hope that something can be found in Chinese culture that will be able to solve the many questions facing human society. Peking University's Professor Tang Yijie discussed the above points to the warm approbation of the attendees of the second International Conference of Sinologists in August this year.

If we look back over China's research into its own culture, obviously there is much need for improvement. The newly appointed president of Tsinghua University's Academy of Chinese Learning, Professor Chen Lai has pointed out that the fourth era of development of Chinese Learning 国学 should be "China as the subject with a global vision", and in the 1930s, Gu Xiegang argued that Chinese Learning proposed to use scientific methodologies to study Chinese history and to study historical Chinese materials. Lin Yutang noted that scientific Chinese Learning was the aim of those engaged in scholarly pursuits. So it is obvious that Chinese Learning does not refer to an object of study but to a scholarly matrix, a research paradigm. Back in the 1930s, Wang Guowei, Liang Qichao, Chen Yinke and other great masters stressed that Chinese Learning research cannot be conducted in isolation from the rest of the world, that Chinese Learning and

[1]Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*. Translated by Michael Bullock (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 7.

international scholarly research must be integrated. As Wang Guowei and Chen Yinke noted: “Let the material objects that have been unearthed and the written evidence that has survived bear witness to one another”, and “the concepts from abroad and the native materials validate each other”, and “the ancient books from abroad and our own classical oeuvre complement each other”, and more. The objective and practice at the time both stressed the use of Eastern classical linguistics and comparative linguistics to study Chinese culture. What they advocated was the integration of Chinese Learning with international sinology and not a rejection of international sinology or research on China by foreigners. Their research made a contribution to Chinese Learning and received the approbation and esteem of sinologists worldwide.

Today, if we were to go backwards and follow the old “centrism” road of the past, and hold that Chinese culture was the “pinnacle” and may be forced upon others and allowed to eclipse all other world cultures, proclaiming some nationalistic “China-centrism”, then Chinese culture would lose its present opportunity and entrench its self-imposed isolation, and place itself outside the global multicultural intercourse and symbiosis, relinquishing an excellent opportunity to make an important contribution to world culture. I believe that our most pressing task at present is first of all to deeply understand the “genome” of Chinese culture, maintain the primacy of our own culture, conscientiously absorb the outstanding achievements of the cultures of other peoples, vigorously seek resources from different cultures that have universal value, and in conjunction with the other peoples of the world, jointly fashion a new spiritual world for mankind, making an important contribution to the reconstruction of a new twenty-first century world culture.

Chapter 32
Comparative Literature in the Era of Globalization—The Chinese Perspective

Address to the Seventeenth Annual Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association

32.1 I

This is the first Annual Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association to be held in China, and I would like to extend our warmest welcome to everyone on behalf of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association.

In 1998, when we were attending the 16th Annual Conference in Holland, we dreamed that the forthcoming new century would be a wonderful century of peaceful development. However, unfortunately, what our new century witnessed was all types of cultural traps and conflicts that are leading mankind to an uncertain and perhaps a terminal abyss. In order to rescue mankind, all perceptive individuals are in a state of deep reflection, hoping to find a path that will lead to happiness and peace.

The renowned French thinker Edgar Morin pointed out in his "Beyond Globalization and Development: World Society or World Empire?"[1] that the fortune of Western civilization carried within it the seeds of its own demise, that its individualism contains within it the isolation and loneliness of self-centeredness and that its technology and prosperity, especially its urban pollution and scientific ignorance, is causing people to be anxious and threatened, leading them towards nuclear annihilation and ecological death. Habermas and Derrida's famous joint work *On European Renewal* advocates a strengthening of the function of the United Nations on the basis of a containment and reduction of military force, the establishment of an effective domestic/local government, and an opposition to imperialist hegemony and unilateral control. The Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman in his *Modernity and the Holocaust* went even further, saying that social control is trending more and more in the direction of inhuman and engineered control, giving

[1]Edgar Morin, "Au–delà de la globalisation et du développement, société–monde ou empire–monde?", Revue du MAUSS 2/2002 (No 20), pp. 43–53 URL: www.cairn.info/revue–du–mauss–2002–2–page–43.htm.

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rise to persecution and annihilation of man himself, becoming the collective social operation of a close cooperation between planners, prosecutors, and victims. They argue that the advanced development of modern civilization has gone beyond the realm of what man is able to control and it can only lead to elevated barbarity.

Obviously, what mankind needs is not the establishment a "perfect" hegemonic imperialism, but rather the establishment of a coexisting and commonly flourishing multicultural "world society" that is built on a united foundation of an enlightened civilization. Under such conditions, the enormous impact of the West's past social ideologies is no longer sufficient to combat the problems facing us today. For example, Western humanism in principle is helpful in offering understanding and tolerance, however whenever it runs into an attack or resistance from other societies, then it becomes hand-tied and helpless. Individualism is effective in encouraging individual benefit and self-defense, but concomitantly it fosters self-serving and neglects any concern for others, resulting in harmful estrangement in the family and in social groups. The original positive Western humanism and individualism are both already struggling to give direction to the present reality. Man's spirit needs a new leap forward, a leap which is not primarily a technological or scientific one, nor simply one in terms of some complex understanding, but rather a major elevation of the soul. What mankind lacks is not any plans or designs, but a new ideological principle that is able to guide our path, and an attitude of moderation and tolerance that is different from anything we have had before. This has led the West to return to its cultural roots and at the same time, to recognize anew the "other," to recognize anew the upsurge that is external to Western culture.

But this type of change is not what Liang Qichao termed at the beginning of the last century as "curing Western material fatigue with Oriental spiritual civilization." To the contrary, perhaps the crisis in Eastern culture is even more profound, as Lu Xun at the beginning of last century described it: "In the past our tendency toward atrophy stemmed from within, but at present transportation has brought a new malady [from afar]. Through the combined attack of these two ailments, China's decline has been hastened. Alas, when thinking of the future, is it not already finished on these counts?" If we say that the relationship of the West towards the East was one of invasion, occupation and imposition, and the East's relationship with the West was one of emulation and submission, then today, a new interactive relationship has emerged which has never been seen before. As the French scholar François Jullien points out in his "Why We Westerners Cannot Avoid China When Studying Philosophy" , China is an extremely important "other" because "The Chinese language lies outside the huge Indo-European language system and what this type of language opens up is a different type of written possibility; the Chinese civilization has developed independently of any practical borrowing or relationship influences with Europe and is the culture with the longest history… China faces our ideology squarely from the outside—and therefore is unaffected by traditional preconceptions—an ideal situation." He argues that to be conversant with China is "so that we are able to read Greece better," so that we can create a space with an expansive prospect, and sever the West's original certain inherent familiarity with Greek thought. He notes: "In order to understand and discover her, we have no

choice but to sever this familiarity and construct an external viewpoint," i.e., from "a space with an expansive prospect for contemplation" and "from the external viewpoint of the other," construct a new awareness of one's self. Similarly, Eastern culture no longer emulates and submits to Western culture like it did in the past, nor does it simply "take" things from the West, but more importantly, we should come to a new recognition of ourselves in the process of reflecting systematically on Western culture and undertake a modern interpretation of our own ancient cultural roots and its development and change and unearth the gems of wisdom that this culture has nurtured over untold millennia that continue to be capable of offering benefit to mankind. The development of human culture is certainly not "unwavering likes an arrow," but rather is frequently a process of looking back at our roots, just as Lao Zi noted: "Turning back is the motion of the *Dao*." At this juncture where both East and West are looking back at the fortunes of their cultural roots and using each other as a reference, this offers an unprecedentedly broad stage for comparative literature in its deepest sense of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary literary research.

32.2 II

Comparative literature is a type of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary study of literature and it is uniquely effective in promoting mutual recognition and dialog between different cultures. In truth, in the global information age, what mankind faces are the same common questions that he has encountered on many occasions throughout history: questions of life and death, love and desire—in other words questions of the harmonious existence of the individual, both mental and physical; issues of power relations and status recognition—in other words, questions of the harmonious coexistence of different people; questions of the relationship between man and his external environment—in other words of the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. The pursuit of "harmony" in these areas has been the common aim of human culture both ancient and modern, Chinese and foreign, however this type of "universality" is expressed in completely different ways depending on the historical period, region and cultural context and it is this that informs a culture's uniqueness. We can say that from ancient times down to the present, all different types of cultures have wrestled manfully with these common conundrums of human survival, and if we understand in depth how the different cultures probe these common conundrums and steadfastly maintain a protracted program of exchange and interaction, then perhaps we will be able to liberate ourselves from our present unidirectional, incomplete, and biased globalist ideology.

By connecting the universal with the particular, developing cultural diversity, protecting the cultural ecology and similar measures, the literature and art can make its own unique contribution. Any great work of art always expresses a certain common facet of human experience and moves the observer to common praise while at the same time communicating with individuals the author's own personal

experience and imagination. When great works are being created, whether consciously or unconsciously, they always emerge from the author's own culture and it is extremely difficult to escape from one's own cultural citadel. And when being interpreted, again, people's perception and understanding of their common experience transcends the distance separating their different cultures. The literature involves human emotion and intelligence with comparatively little consideration of utility. The common themes of the literatures of different cultural systems are extremely rich, including such things as "an awareness of death," "the ecological environment," "man's final days," "Utopia" or "thoughts of escaping the world." People of different cultural systems all offer their own responses to these questions according to their own different lifestyles and modes of thinking. These responses reflect the echoes of an ancient historical tradition while at the same time being subject to the choices and interpretations of modern day man and the contemporary context. This is the mutual recognition, mutual confirmation, and complementarity of the literature between different cultural systems. Mutual recognition refers to the recognition, understanding, and appreciation of the literature between different cultures. Mutual confirmation means identifying common problems in the process of mutual certification, confirming their common nature, or rebutting their dissimilarities in order to reach a greater understanding and engagement. Complementarity, meanwhile, means to take a mode of thinking previously existing in one culture and use it to decode the text of another culture, resulting in achieving a completely new interpretation and reading of that text. Through a process of mutual recognition, mutual confirmation and complementarity between the literatures of many different cultural systems and multiple and repeated dialogs, the common problems facing mankind can enjoy our generation's most comprehensive response and at the same time, open up an even broader prospect and future for discussion and people's thinking and emotions will in this way find engagement and understanding. Herein lies the value of the literary research that we are engaged in.

In actual fact, currently, a number of outstanding works of comparative literature all comprehensively demonstrate the principles of mutual recognition, mutual confirmation and complementarity. For example, Professor Earl Miner's *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature*, Professor Steven Owen's *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* and Professor Eugene Eoyang's *Transparent Eye*, along with Wai-lim Yip's research on Daoist aesthetics and Leo Ou-fan Lee's discussion of modernity are all clear proof of this fact. Even more worthy of mention is the fact that not only was a chapter entitled "A History of East Asian Literary History" inserted into the nine chapter work entitled *A History of World Comparative Literature* and edited by the International Association of Comparative Literature, but content on the modern and contemporary literatures of China and other non-Western regions was inserted into the modern and post-modern volume of the work edited by Professor Douwe Fokkema. In addition, many new works by sinologists have been breaking completely new ground, for example the French sinologist Francois Jullien's *Le Detour Et L'acces*, the American sinologist Roger Ames and the philosopher David Hall's joint

publication *Thinking Through Confucius*, amongst others. In sum, Western sinological and theoretical research and comparative literature appear to be converging and creating a completely new vista for cross-cultural research.

In addition, cross-disciplinary literary research is a pillar of comparative literature. Owing to the increasingly profound influence of natural science on man's livelihood, cross-cultural research in twenty-first-century literature might possibly be even more focused on how mankind will face scientific advances and the challenges of science. Scientific advancement has already offered the literature, many complete new concepts. In the nineteenth century, the theory of evolution completely rewrote all aspects of literary theory, literary criticism, and literary creation, while in the twentieth century, the influence of systems theory, information theory, cybernetics, the second law of thermodynamics, and the notion of entropy on the literature was in no way shy of the influence of evolution on nineteenth century literature. In the twenty-first century, mankind will experience a biological century the likes of which he could never have imagined. Man's genetic code will be revealed, and he will be able to begin to probe the very blueprint of life. This will profoundly change our existing philosophical, ethical, legal, and other concepts. Regarding genome sequencing and genetic research, the implementation of cloning technology and the myriads of moral and ethical questions inspired by the attitude of man towards his place in the universe, all of these offer new challenges to the humanities. Mankind has already been involuntarily divided into two groups of the "technologically literate" and "technologically illiterate" and the chasm between the two is ever deepening. The "technologically literate" are only literate in an extremely limited area of the natural sciences and technology and without the guidance of the spirit of the humanities, the disaster that this type of division brings would be impossible to estimate. The questions mentioned above without exception have first of all been exhibited in literature. Science fiction with its fantastic oddities of every description, along with science fiction movies, depicts in advance the bleak future that man faces if science were to separate itself from human objectives and morph into a force that cannot be controlled. Cross-cultural literary research, and especially the integration and interaction between the natural sciences and literary research, will certainly turn a completely new page in comparative literature development.

To our mind, the object of comparative literary research relates to the lives and future of all mankind. Comparative literature permanently underscores the spirit of the humanities in being concerned for the welfare of mankind. It is certainly not an isolated branch of learning that can be pursued by a small group of elite scholars in a chamber locked away from the world. It needs to include content from the most obvious, the most elementary to the most profound. It can enrich the linguistic curriculum of middle school and lead children from a very young age to understand the vastness of this world and the endless variety of human cultural creation and to have an international conception (naturally a very basic one), and finally to gradually dig deeper, right down to the region where only a handful of the most perceptive are able to penetrate. This is currently our principle view of the development of the comparative literature.

32.3 III

Chinese comparative literature is a branch of modern literature research that has sprung forth from China's native soil. It is neither something that has been shipped here from across the ocean, nor is it something that has always existed. Its birth is inseparable from the Chinese people's reinvigoration of the desires of the nation's peoples and their aspiration of renovating and developing their native literature. It began with promoting and introducing foreign literature and with rediscovering ourselves in the context of foreign literature and seeking a new road of development. Its consistent foundation remained in the deep roots and luxuriant foliage of China's literary tradition. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the works of Lin Shu, Wang Guowei and Lu Xun amply illustrate this point.

In 1985, the China Comparative Literature Association was established in Shenzhen by some 36 universities and research institutions and agreed on seven research topics, namely Methodology of Comparative Literature, Comparative Literature and Modern Chinese Literature, Comparative Poetics and Aesthetics, Oriental Comparative Literature, Comparative Studies of the Literature of Ethnic Minorities in China, Comparative Studies of Mythology in the East and West, and General Literature and Interdisciplinary Studies. In the past 20 years, Chinese comparative literature has progressed along the path of these seven topics and in recent years there has been more new ground broken and harvests reaped, of which the following deserve particular mention:

32.3.1 Literary Anthropology and the Modern Interpretation of China's Ancient Classics

Literary anthropology is an especially vigorous cross-disciplinary new field spawned in the past twenty years by Chinese comparative literature. From 1991 to the present, there have been more than eight million characters successively published in the *Chinese Culture's Anthropological Breakthroughs* series, including modern anthropological interpretations of such ancient classics as the *Book of Poetry*, *Songs of Chu*, *Lao Zi*, *Zhuang Zi*, *The Book of History*, the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the recently published eighth category *Cultural Footprints in the Classic of Mountain and Sea* has especially produced an extremely original interpretation of this most mystical and abstruse ancient classic work as viewed in an international cultural context. It argues that the *Classic of Mountain and Sea* is an imaginative archetypal specimen of a "legendary political geography" as well as being a textual point of origin for a united world view of Chinese civilization which is replete with both demonology as well as precious utopian "culturally other" imaginings. The 2003 published *Literature and Anthropology—Literary Research in an Era of Globalized Knowledge* by Ye Shuxian, grounded itself in the native culture and presented an extremely prescient opinion and

workable strategy for intellectual innovation in China's literary research, including emphasizing an interaction between the native and external discourses, between documentary and green-field texts, and between centrist and peripheral discourses, etc.

32.3.2 The Theory and Practice of Literary Translation

China is a translation giant which not only has more than two millennia of experience, but also leads the world by a huge margin in terms of the number of individuals engaged in the practice as well as the number of works. According to statistics, in the first decade of the twentieth century, translated works of the literature occupied four fifths of the nation's total literary output. Today, the various categories of translated works occupy almost one half of all published goods in the country. Literary translation differs from normal textual translation in that it is not simply a matter of a conversion of textual symbols, but a transmission and reconstruction of cultural concepts. Literary translation cannot exist independently of the translator's literary recreation and the duty of a translator is not only to creatively reconstruct the original meaning, but he also needs to "in places where it is impossible to communicate, to create the capacity for communication"—in other words, to develop the native language in places where the two languages intersect. For this reason, literary translation is an essential and important component of the modern literature. China took the lead in publishing *A Draft History of Chinese Literary Translation*, *A Draft History of the Chinese Theory of Translation*, and *A History of Modern Chinese Literary Translation*. In addition, *A Compendium of Translation Theory and Practice* included more than 30 different works on translation, and *A Compendium of Chinese Translation Research* included almost 20 different works on translation theory by Chinese translation specialists. It is even more worthwhile mentioning the fact that Shanghai International Studies University has established China's first independent site for offering a degree in translation studies, has admitted doctoral and masters students in translation studies, and confirmed that translation studies is an independent discipline in its own right.

32.3.3 Research on Overseas Chinese Literature and Diasporic Literature

China's comparative literature community has made great strides in research into overseas Chinese literature. This research looks at overseas Chinese literature as a literary imagination of a meeting, clash and fusion of different cultures from a theoretical perspective and progresses the dialog with an alien culture and a mutual interpretation between different cultures. In recent years, this study of overseas

Chinese literature has quickly expanded to a global scale and into works by overseas Chinese written in different languages and has converged with the global tide of research on diasporic literature. China has the largest number of emigrants in the world and has a long history and this type of research will necessarily make its own irreplaceable contribution into the future. At present, Guangdong's Jinan University and Beijing's Tsinghua University have already become strategic centers in this respect.

32.3.4 Research into the Relationship Between Chinese and Foreign Literature

The greatest advance in this area probes twentieth century Chinese literature and world literature as a whole. Fudan University's "Sino-Foreign Literary Relations in the twentieth century" and "The Influence of the Theories of Foreign Schools of Thought on the History of China's Modern Literature" research programs are guided by this principle. Peking University's "China's Modern Writers in an Historical and International Context" also comprehensively debates the interaction between China's traditional cultural legacy and Western cultural influence as evidenced in the work of twentieth century Chinese writers. As to research into "Chinese literature outside China," in the 1980s some eight works on Chinese literature in France, England, Germany, Japan, and elsewhere were published and in the last two years an even more ambitious eight volume work *Foreign Authors and Chinese Culture* (edited by Qian Linsen) has been published which has further studied the relationship of Chinese culture with that of the Arab and Russian worlds, amongst others.

In addition, in recent years, Chinese scholars of comparative literature have chalked up significant achievements in such areas as imagologie, comparative poetics, studies in the rise of East Asian literature, and cross-cultural ecological literary studies.

As far as pedagogy is concerned, currently the majority of China's universities offer courses in comparative literature and the number of universities offering doctoral or masters programs have reached over 50. Comparative literature has been afforded special attention at Beijing Normal University, Capital Normal University, Tianjin Normal University, and Shanghai Normal University. Year after year their graduates carry the spirit of comparative literature into the middle schools. Already some eight different comparative literature journals are published nationwide in Chinese and foreign languages and Beijing and Shanghai have both established large scale websites and databases of an international standard on comparative literature. Currently, the number of members of the China Comparative Literature Association has topped 900 and all the provincial level associations have their own activities, the most active of which are Sichuan, Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Guangdong. In addition, Shaanxi, Guizhou, Hunan, Jilin, and other local

associations have all hosted national comparative literature annual conferences. The China Comparative Literature Education Research Association, Literary Anthropology Association, Biographical Association, the Post-Modern Research Association, etc., which all come under the umbrella of the China Comparative Literature Association, are all actively expanding their work.

Not to mince words, mankind is currently experiencing an unprecedented and extremely unpredictable new era. Under the shadow of global "unification," promoting heterogeneous cultural development, strengthening the understanding and tolerance between peoples, and opening up and broadening all channels of communication is perhaps the only hope for saving human civilization. I believe that, grounded in China's cultural heritage and as an integral part of international cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary literary research program, China's comparative literature will in the future play a unique role in doing away with the ideology of globalism and improving the dispersed, isolated, and marooned conditions that postmodernism has created.

Part V
Into the New Millennium

Chapter 33
The New Humanist Spirit of the Twenty-First Century

33.1 Raising the Question

Mankind is currently experiencing unprecedented massive space-time changes: the Internet, mobile communication, and computer storage technology has massively reduced his space-time distances, life sciences have deepened mankind's sense of bewilderment towards human nature and the future, and nanotechnology has offered mankind the possibility of addressing the previously unknowable microscopic world. All of this has brought tremendously profound changes to all aspects of man's life. And these changes are certainly no less significant than those great social changes experienced in the transition from fishing and hunting to agricultural production or from agriculture to mechanical production. Currently, the economic revolution that is proceeding on a global scale has caused the power of the depersonalized mechanical laws of the market to increasingly exercise control over man and the power of the majority to influence society has been steadily diminished. Cyberspace, which has been created by the digital revolution, symbolizes the appearance of a strange new continent and human activity has largely gravitated in its direction, meaning that it has formed an important and integral part of that activity. The revolution in genetics has meant that man is able, by means of genetic modification, stem cell therapy, cloning and in vitro fertilization, to copy, change, and selectively improve even his own body itself. In sum, the meaning of man's existence and his definition of his own nature have all been fundamentally challenged. In other words, everything that in the past belonged to the realm of "meaning" and "convention" is about to be comprehensively shaken.

On the other hand, modern society has gone through several centuries of development and created hitherto unheard of progress and riches. However, its weaknesses have also been amply exposed. The most important features of modernity, such as the negative impacts of such things as "the omnipotence of economic growth," "absolute individual freedom" and "homo-centrism" and "scientism," are currently being extensively called into question.

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The first thing is "the omnipotence of economic growth." In actual fact, unrestricted economic growth is not only "all powerful," but has also brought unprecedented harm to mankind. Economic growth implies increased production and increased profits. If these products are armaments, then the result of the increase is to unleash wars. If they are normal products, then high consumption must be promoted. Consumption leads to making useful goods worthless. The *Bible* relates one story of when the Israelites were leaving Egypt, God prepared food for them which they called "manna." Every day people could take what they needed, but some thought they would hoard it, and it all turned putrid. Currently, every day a considerable amount of useful goods is senselessly rendered useless and people see the accumulation of immense material wealth as the most important goal of their lives while ignoring other spiritual values. In fact, this type of person is not necessarily fortunate. The wealth of America leads the world, but the number of Americans who believe themselves to be fortunate (the so-called happiness index) ranks them 16th in the world. The American population is less than 5 % of the world's population, but it consumes more than one third of the world's resources and people consume excessively, indulge in all manner of cravings and consume the planet's riches.

The social harm that absolute individual freedom brings is especially serious. As the French thinker and Advanced Social Science academician Edgar Morin points out, Western civilization's individualism contains within it the isolation and loneliness of self-centeredness; its blind economic development brought moral and psychological lethargy and created a disconnectedness in all domains, restricting people's capacity for wisdom and leading people to be hamstrung when faced with complex issues, unable to recognize basic or overall problems.[1]

Blind "homo-centrism" has rendered the planet that we rely on for our existence to descend to the very edge of crisis such that it will be difficult for us to extricate ourselves. This is the evil consequence of several centuries of progress of Western civilization. The foundation of the Western Enlightenment science was "the conquest of nature" and "remoulding nature," demanding that it accords with the requirements of mankind, and which has resulted in today's plethora of environmental disasters. China's traditional culture rarely endorses the view that mankind is able to manipulate the environment. On the contrary, it stresses "the unity of heaven and man" with the emphasis on the need to regulate oneself according to the needs of one's environment. However, after a century of modernization, the cost has similarly resulted in extremely serious damage to the natural environment. Today, as one of most rapidly developing economies in the world, 16 of the world's most heavily polluted cities are right here in China. How to immediately realize the comprehensive protection of our ecology is truly the most essential element of our present "sustainable development.."

[1]Edgar Morin, "Au–delà de la globalisation et du développement, société–monde ou empire–monde? "[Beyond Globalization and Development: World Society or World Empire?], Revue du MAUSS 2/2002 (No 20), pp. 43–53.

As one of the core concepts of modernity, "scientism" insists that the only rational cognitive style is a scientific one which conforms to reason. In reality, cognitive styles should be manifold. Religion, music, art, poetry, and more are all capable of producing wisdom and forming our intellectual capital. For a long period, Chinese cultural traditions have taken "emotion/sentiment" as its nucleus, and through a process of "sudden enlightenment," the spiritual world of untold sages has been forged. However all of this has been labeled "unscientific" or "pseudo-scientific" and dismissed from the realm of cognition. The fate of the theories and practice of Chinese medicine is an excellent example of this.

Due to the tremendous changes brought about by the scientific advances outlined above, and the serious problems created by several centuries of modernization, added to which we have the bitter memories of two twentieth century world wars, as well as the cruel lessons of ideological disasters such as the fascist Jewish concentration camps, the "gulag archipelago," the "Cultural Revolution," and more, all of which demands of us that we reconsider what kind of a new world man should establish in the twenty-first century, and especially what kind of new world view and view of life should mankind's spiritual world embrace in order to confront this completely new and complex situation that effects the whole globe, redefining the state of man, considering anew the meaning of mankind's existence and mode of survival. These are the complex circumstances under which the new twenty-first century humanist spirit has been mooted.

33.2 Reflections and Cultural Self-awareness of Humanity in the Twenty-First Century

The critical situation outlined above cannot but give people pause for reflection. At the end of the twentieth century, two diametrically opposite tides of thought appeared in the West. One was a new "theory of imperialism" in which it is argued that "imperialism" is "the sole sovereignty that transcends state boundaries and all multi-national agreements," and only a new "imperialism" can unite the world, manage it, and bring peace. On entering the twenty-first century, the "theory of imperialism" developed further into a new hegemonic theory, stressing the rolling out of American style democracy and values, arguing that the international order is not established on a balance of power but on the foundation of the superpower status of the unparalleled might of the US military and that any challenge by any regional power to its leading position in Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East must be prevented, along with the appearance of any rival new great power. America's armed forces and wars must be proactively transformed, and its leadership position in controlling cyberspace and outerspace must be maintained in order to facilitate "the promotion of the principles of freedom and democracy across the globe." Their new grand imperialist strategy is first to steal a march on the rest of the world, attack their imagined enemy, then redefine the meaning of "sovereignty," promote the doctrine

of limited sovereignty, hold in contempt and revise international norms and advocate for the imminent arrival of the so-called "post-nationalist era."

"Neo-imperialism" has met with fierce resistance all over the world, but especially in Europe. In the year 2000, Edgar Morin, at the Lille Conference of World Citizens in France, delivered a keynote address entitled "Beyond Globalization and Development: World Society or World Empire?"[2] He argued that in the globalization of the 1990s, at the same time as technical and economic globalization was being promoted, another type of globalization was also being encouraged, and that is humanist and democratic globalization, and that whilst this had not yet been completed, that it was as yet not fully formed and weak, nevertheless, it offered oppressed peoples the notion of liberation and facilitated the further decolonialization of the vast majority of regions across the world. He especially indicated that this type of cultural globalization had not homogenized culture, but rather it had incentivized all ethnic cultures to express internally their own creativity, and thus to recreate a new diversity.

On May 31, 2003, all major European newspapers and journals published Habermas and Derrida's jointly authored article "On European Renewal" They analyzed the distinguishing characteristics of Europe and argued that Europe had experienced two world wars, that several larger states like Germany, France, Spain, and Portugal, amongst others had experienced the pinnacle of imperial power, and that they had inevitably gained a degree of enlightenment from the experience of imperial demise. They pointed out that Europeans harbor a deep-seated skepticism about the capacity of market regulation and instead tend to have more faith in the capacity for nations to organize and to regulate. Europeans are also not so blindly optimistic about technical progress and tend to lean more towards institutional regulation based on social solidarity and respect for the integrity of the dignity of the individual. They also advocate strengthening the role of the United Nations on the basis of the control and reduction in military force, and the establishment of a type of effective "world government." As far as Europe is concerned, imperialist control and colonial history is a thing of the past and European powers have had a chance to reflect. This could help them discard their Euro-centrism and speed up the realization of Kant's idyllic expectation of a "world government."

In 2006 the American scholar Jeremy Rifkin wrote *The European Dream*[3] in which he argued that we must reflect deeply on a civilization that focuses on greed and accumulation ("the American dream") and criticize it; that we should build anew a sustainable civilization that is based on the quality of life and not on the unbridled accumulation of wealth by the individual. The present view of development itself which is based on material values must be amended. The aim of a sustainable global economy should be: by linking man's production and consumption with the capacity

[2]Edgar Morin, "Au–delà de la globalisation et du développement, société-monde ou empire-monde? "in Revue du MAUSS 2/2002 (No 20), pp. 43–53.

[3]Jeremy Rifkin: *The European Dream—How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

of the natural world and by recycling and resource renewal, to constantly reproduce a high quality of life. And in such a life, what is important is not individual material accumulation, but rather self-cultivation; not the amassing of wealth, but the elevation of the spirit; not territorial expansion, but rather the expansion of human empathy. He believed that mankind needed a new spiritual world that was completely different to that of the past, along with a completely new world view and view of life.

In the process of reflecting on the crisis in its own culture, a trend of emphasizing interactive cognition and a renewed recognition of the East have arisen in the West. As the contemporary French thinker and French academician Jean-Francois Revel states: "Following many centuries of mutual ignorance, in the last twenty years a genuine dialog has already been established between those major tides of Buddhism and Western thought… The aim of the Buddhist pathway, like those other great spiritual traditions, is to help us improve human existence. Science has not achieved this intended aim, nor has it offered the means to this end." To this ends, a number of scholars seek to find a new future from a convergence between Western and non-Western cultures.

Firstly, they take non-Western culture, and especially Chinese culture, as a point of reference and attempt to return to the source of their own culture, interrogate history and take a fresh look at their own culture, finding new interpretations and searching for a new point of departure. The French scholar Francois Jullien wrote a special report entitled *Why We Westerners Cannot Avoid China When Studying Philosophy*—an excellent piece. He argues that to come to know oneself fully one must leave behind the closeted self, and observe [oneself] from a different, external perspective. To his mind, "To get across China is in fact so that we can read Greece better. The aim is to reclaim a little theoretical wriggle-room, adopt a new starting point, and liberate oneself from the different theoretical disputes that one finds oneself in and has no way of differentiating because one is immersed in them."

Not only should it be used as a reference point, but new content must be absorbed from non-Western cultures. In 2003, at the "Multivariate Beauty" international conference convened by the Institute for Comparative Literature and Culture at Peking University, the French master of comparative literature, Prof. Daniel-Henri Pageaux especially pointed out: "François Jullien's research on Greek and Chinese culture is a good example. It corroborates precisely the benefits manifest by the process of "revisiting" via an 'other' which I have already spoken about." He also stressed that "From the outline of this conference I can see the importance of the concept of 'Harmony' ("Harmony gives birth to thinks but homogeneity halts their growth")…The Chinese principle of 'harmony in diversity' will certainly become an important ethical resource which will enable us to realize diverse coexistence and mutual respect." The works of some American sinologists also reflected this change in epistemology, including Roger Ames and David Hall's joint publication *Thinking Through Confucius* Steven Shankman's edited volume, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China* and England's E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered*, amongst. others.

In addition, changing the colonialist mentality, reflecting on the shortcomings of one's previous West-centrism, and correcting one's attitude of excluding and showing contempt for non-Western cultures, are all very important. Professor Armando Gnisci of Rome University in Italy believes that the process of overcoming West-centrism is a difficult process of "painful remoulding." He terms the discipline of comparative literature a "Discipline of decolonialization" In his work *La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation*[4] he states: "If, to those countries that have thrown off Western colonialism, the discipline of comparative literature represents a type of understanding, study and realization of the methodology of decolonization, then to all we European scholars, it can be said that it represents a methodology for freeing ourselves of our colonial mentality… It involves a kind of self-criticism and a lesson to ourselves and others, a transformation. This is a type of *askesis*!"[5] Without this type of "*askesis*/strict self-discipline" and self-reflection, one will maintain a supercilious colonialist attitude towards others and multicultural coexistence will be impossible.

If we accept that Western culture has occupied a position of power for several centuries, and that its cultural self-awareness in the face of today's grand trend towards multiculturalism is tending more and more towards a close examination of its own state of crisis and weakness, then in the last century, Chinese culture, as one of the less powerful cultures, has continued to be despised and repressed by Western culture. Contemporary Chinese cultural awareness cannot but first of all unite with the aspirations of ethnic cultural renaissance. Just as Mr. Fei Xiaotong said, cultural self-awareness demands that one first of all has knowledge of one's self. In other words, one must thoroughly recognize one's own history and traditions. This is the root and seed of continued survival for any culture. However, it is not sufficient for a culture to merely have seeds. It needs to develop, it needs to bloom and bear fruit. If a tradition loses its creativity then it is moribund. Only through continuous creation can tradition be given life. So-called "creation" means continually "combining the conditions and demands of the past and the present and with an attitude of development, open up a new point of departure for the culture of the future," and at the same time, the current external environment needs to be especially monitored. The reality of globalization requires that there be some behavioral rules and cultural standards that must be commonly complied with. We cannot turn a deaf ear to these rules and standards, but rather we need to be conversant with them and master them and in this context, look back at oneself, discover one's ethnic cultural "self" and know the significance of the existence of Chinese culture in this new context, understand what position Chinese culture occupies in world culture and what contribution it is able to make to future world

[4]Katalin Kürtösi and Jozsef Pal (eds.), *Celebrating Comparativism* (Szeged: Attila Jozsef U/Gold Press, 1994), pp. 69–75; or Chapter 2 of Armando Gnisci, *We the Europeans: Italian Essays on Postcolonialism* (The Davies Group, 2014).

[5]Armando Gnisci, *La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation* [*Comparative Litaerature as a Discipline of Decolonialization*]. See also Chap. 2 of Armando Gnisci: *We the Europeans: Italian Essays on Postcolonialism*.

development. The upshot of all of this is: we must first know our own culture and at the same time understand the many cultures that we come in contact with and only then will we be qualified to confirm our own position in this multicultural world that is forming right now and to autonomously adapt and together with other cultures, maintain the good and repair the shortcomings and together establish a fundamental order and a set of conditions that attract common endorsement and which facilitates peaceful coexistence, the ability of all to give voice to their strengths, and to advance hand in hand.

For many years, research in this area has been hampered by blind patriotism and an "attitude of national chauvinism." Currently there are already many Chinese scholars who are paying special attention to reinterpreting Chinese culture in the new world context, changing the closed, blind adulation of the "national essence" of the past and working hard to begin from the requirements of global cultural development, and examining closely our nation's outstandingly rich cultural resources. They are especially studying, in the midst of the current cultural clashes, exactly what contribution Chinese culture is able to make, and at the same time, through dialog with the "other," getting to know ourselves anew. However, we still lack consistency and a comprehensive and thoroughgoing reflection, both in relation to the West as well as to ourselves. The powerful hopes for a native cultural renaissance have invariably been distorted into a sealed, xenophobic cultural "nostalgia." What some people seek is not an "enlightened self-awareness" of our own culture, but a savage and headlong overstated restoration of the past. This obviously runs counter to today's tide of the times.

In fact, the most fundamental essentials for a cultural renaissance are the need to construct a modern "new Chinese spirit." It demands of us that we use a Chinese methodology and imagine for China a social and lifestyle concept, a set of values, and we also need to imagine a concept of the world for China because China needs to become an international power that shoulders its responsibilities. If China is not able to develop a conceptual, discourse, and knowledge framework, then it will not be able to use its new China spirit to participate in the constantly developing international cultural reconstruction. This means that we most definitely cannot be satisfied with a Chinese culture that is parochial, and even less can we shut ourselves off within the traditional culture that was produced by society in the distant past, but rather, we must reinterpret it, and identify what contribution it can make towards the global culture. "If the Chinese intellectual discourse is unable to participate in the construction of an international intellectual discourse, and thus create a new universal world intellectual discourse, and become an intellectual production powerhouse, then despite its mighty economic might and being a major producer of material products, it will still remain a minnow"[6].

In reality, the twenty-first century new humanist spirit can only be constructed and prosper through the interaction, mutual recognition, and complementarity between the world's different cognitive systems and cultural spirits.

[6]Zhao Tingyang, "Meiguo meng, Ouzhou meng he," *Dialogue Transculturel*, Vol. 18, p. 161.

33.3 Some Reflections on the New Twenty-First Century Humanist Spirit

What do we mean by humanist spirit? From an historical perspective, it is the humanist spirit that was promoted during the European Enlightenment of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Or alternatively, humanism refers to human nature or man's dignity and attaching importance to the value of man and stressing how to raise man's status and understand his true essence. The emphasis mostly falls on ensuring the free development of the individual as a counter to the repressive control of the medieval theocracy. At the commencement of the rise of capitalism, people had already invested heavily in the potential for free trade, in the concept of the liberation of the individual and in spiritual autonomy, feeling that to a certain degree, after breaking away from the drudgery of physical labor and poverty; mankind would have space for liberation and independence. Occurring at this same time was the sudden rise of the passionate and unrestrained romantic tide. However, contrary to earlier expectations, mankind descended into an unprecedented and sudden divided world of rich and poor, and the unstoppable pursuit of development had already become the sole meaning of existence itself. Satisfying one's greed became the goal of life and the vast majority of people became bound in hopeless and monotonous mechanical labor in order to survive. The grip of money on human nature replaced the earlier capitalist promise of its liberation. The free development of the individual that the Enlightenment movement had guaranteed morphed into a crazed pursuit of material wealth. Excessive materialism resulted in the alienation of man, or in other words, the suffocation and disappearance of human nature.

China's advocacy of "humanity" appeared as early as the *Book of Changes*: "Observe astronomical phenomena so as to discern the change of seasons; observe the logic of humanity so that life under heaven may be cultivated according to it." What the humanity here stressed was how to cultivate human society into a *tianxia* (i.e., everything under heaven) where heaven and earth were in harmony, and the way to achieve this was not the free development of the individual, but to restrict and constrain the "bad" aspects of human nature. As Meng Zi said: "Humans are scarcely different from animals!" Naturally human nature includes quite a few animal traits. Thus the aim of humanity is to remain within one's allotted space in order to maintain social harmony and tranquility.

By the 1920s, a few scholars from the West had already noticed the dangers that the Enlightenment had brought. The American scholar Irving Babbitt referred to China's humanist spirit, pointing out: If man is to indeed be man, then we must not allow the normal "self" complete freedom of action but rather we should mobilize self-discipline and enable the normal "self" to recognize true "priorities and consequences." He believed that Confucius surpasses many of the superior humanists in the Western humanist tradition. Confucius' advocacy of "benevolence means the suppression of the self and a return to propriety," "the Middle way," "self-discipline," etc., in fact had already become the fundamental mainstay of the new humanism that he promoted. He used this as the basis for opposing the

supra-ethical objective scientism represented by Bacon as well as the hedonism as represented by Rousseau, an extreme individualism that was not subject to the rules of morality. However, Babbitt's theories were unable to prevent the West's spiritual world from becoming materialistic and human nature from continuing to decline.

What then is this twenty-first century new humanist spirit? There is no essentialist answer, however we can use the aspects outlined below as food for thought. First, this is a new type of historical view. According to this historical view, the "modern development model" itself, with an increase in material wealth, ecological destruction and uncapped consumption as a basis, must be revised. The new humanist spirit transcends homo-centrism and upholds ecological consciousness. It argues that "mankind is only one of a multitude of species, and is no better or worse than any of the others. He has his own place in the ecological system and only when he is of benefit to that ecological system will he have his own value." The famous ecologist Thomas Berry argues that man is the center of the universe. Man's sacred duty is to be engaged with the universe and care for the earth and sky. This is exactly as Zhu Xi noted: "Heaven is Man and Man is Heaven. The birth of Man was of Heaven. Heaven gave birth to Man and Heaven is within Man." "Heaven" must be manifest through "man." Only through a creatively free, pragmatically independent "man" who is in communion with "heaven/nature" can heaven/nature's vivacious ambience be truly revealed. If we say that in the past the foundation of the West's Enlightenment science was to "refashion" nature, and make it conform to the image of man, then the Eastern method is to reject any thought of mankind being able to control his environment and for him to regulate himself according to the needs of his environment. The East's complementary ecological ideology and concept of scientific advancement is an important part of the new twenty-first century humanist spirit.

The new humanist spirit stresses a "sustainable civilization" that is based on "the quality of life" and not the unbridled accumulation of wealth. The so-called "quality of life" refers to "real life conditions" and "individual citizens' subjective feeling of happiness," such as health, happiness, harmonious social relations, a green natural environment, and more. A "sustainable civilization" which is formed on this basis refers to an emphasis on universal human rights and the rights of nature and not simply private property; a stress on global cooperation and not the unilateral abuse of power; an emphasis on mutual community dependence and not absolute individual independence; in this kind of a community, the freedom that is gained is not that of the individual to do whatever he pleases, but the capacity to enter into an untold number of mutually dependent relationships with others; and the more communities one engages with, one's power of choice is greater, which means that one has more freedom. In this kind of a community, when an individual uses his "freedom" to weaken the social community, the result is to also weaken himself. In Confucian ideology, without a "self" one is still able to exist independently or be able to be pondered abstractly; the "self" is the sum of all the different interactions one has with other individuals; and the Daoists believe that the whole exists in the relationship between opposite forces: they jointly complement each other. To sum up, the new humanism rejects the concept of abstract freedom and moves towards a

responsible and profound freedom. It introduces the concepts of responsibility and duty into that of freedom, exposing the inherent relationship between freedom and duty. What the new humanist spirit seeks is not to broaden the scope of power, but to extend mankind's mutual understanding and to strive to correct the mistaken calls of the first Enlightenment for "materialism" and the doctrine of unbridled progress (a hell-bent, unrestrained search for the new), and an unconditional individualism, its final aim being to liberate human nature from the prison of materialism and construct a new human nature.

To liberate mankind from the prison of materialism, the most important strategy is to transcend mechanistic reason and call for esthetic intelligence. Mechanistic reason has already brought great progress and riches to mankind; however at the same time it has also made it difficult for people to put aside their utilitarian motivation. Esthetic intelligence is a type of integrated mode of thinking that is based on a founding concept of organic relationships, and guided by a harmonious fusion of a sense of truth, goodness and beauty and knowing the facts. Here scientific, rational, emotional, religious and artistic thinking complement each other and enrich each other. Being influenced by the mode of binary opposition thinking, modern rationality is premised on a rejection of the value of sentiment, emotion and beauty. Meanwhile, esthetic intelligence also stresses mutually harmonious thinking. Traditional Chinese culture has always placed "emotion," "harmony" and adoration of the beauty of nature at its core, and in a global context, it will undoubtedly open up a completely new way of thinking which is completely different from the West.

If we say that the first Enlightenment in the eighteenth century was focused on "liberation of the self" and seeking universality, then what the twenty-first century new humanism advocates is respect for others, respect for difference, a championing of multicultural complementarity, and especially East-West cultural complementarity. The ideology of the first Enlightenment, having experienced several centuries of modernist development, by the 1960s, the postmodern structuralist movement caused the authoritative and enforced modernist unity of thinking that had been created over many years to lose its luster and at the same time, scattered, splintered and made everything superficial until all that was left was small fragments of modernist thought and a cacophonous, split and splintered world. In a world where there are no boundaries, where all is in chaos and there is no order, one which is collapsing and falling apart, people have turned into wandering existential tribes, roaming around in despair. As Rifkin states in his *European Dream*, running through the two modern day spiritual trends is: firstly, in an increasingly materialistic world, a thirst for some kind of higher individual calling; secondly, in a steadily alienating and indifferent society, a need to search for some kind of common consciousness. He believes that this is the common quest of perceptive individuals in both Europe and China. In order to survive together in an increasingly closely connected world, mankind must constantly develop new concepts, and on this point China and Europe will certainly find more and deeper things in common, and these common things are the refashioning of the twenty-first century new humanist spirit.

Summarizing our discussion above, no matter whether from the point of view of the natural environment, scientific progress or social demands, mankind faces an unprecedentedly significant adjustment. If we are to peacefully navigate this adjustment we must first change the view of life and world view that mankind currently subscribes to and reconfigure mankind's spiritual world. Chinese culture is one with a mighty ideological capacity and has always had a deep tradition of pursuing a spiritual life and placing morality in an exalted position. Chinese culture reserves a major space where the harmony between man and nature can be enhanced, and where the rupture between rational thought and spiritual conviction, material pursuit and esthetic interest, or natural science and humanist solicitude can be mediated. If these cultural genes inherent in Chinese culture are combined with a modern interpretation and we face the contemporary multicultural world, then we will be able to create a new conceptual framework, discursive language and intellectual paradigm and, together with other cultures, jointly construct the new twenty-first century humanist spirit and usher in a completely new era of human history.

Chapter 34
On the Third Phase of the Development of Comparative Literature

At a time when the discipline of comparative literature is changing track or withering away in one Euro-American state after another, why is it that China's comparative literature has continued to maintain its vigorous development momentum? I think this has primarily got to do with the nature of China's comparative literature itself.

Euro-American comparative literature already has more than a century of history, but the Chinese discipline is not a direct branch of that history. Although it appeared in the same historical context, and was heavily influenced by global comparative literature, nevertheless it had its own unique trajectory of birth and growth.

The 100 years of the twentieth century were a period when China's scholarly culture was transformed from a traditional to a modern form and in the midst of the clashes and intermingling of Chinese and foreign scholarship, it made a century-long tortuous journey towards maturity and prosperity. During this one hundred years, comparative literature was first a concept and methodology of scholarly research, and only later became a relatively independent scholarly discipline, and it left its own indelible and unique imprint on China's scholarly history. The birth, development, and prosperity of comparative literature in twentieth century China was first of all founded on the native need for reform of China's concept of literary research and renovation of its methodology. This determined the basic characteristics of China's twentieth century comparative literature. Research into the history of scholarship shows that China's comparative literature was not something that has existed from ancient times, nor was it something shipped in from abroad, but rather it was founded on the native literature's own internal developmental requirements, and arose in the context of global exchange as a completely new humanistic phenomenon replete with Chinese characteristics.

This beginning and its subsequent development was responsible for the considerable difference between China's comparative literature and that of the West. If we say that comparative literature in the beginning, in France and Europe generally, was born as a branch of literary history research, then at its inception it appeared in the classrooms as a purely scholarly "phenomenon of the academy." On the other hand, at the beginning of the twentieth century, comparative literature in China was

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not a pure scholarly phenomenon, nor was it a product of the academy. Rather, it was intimately connected to Chinese society and to the transition of Chinese literature from tradition to modernity. Its birth presaged the end of the closed nature of Chinese literature and hinted at a conscious movement by Chinese literature to begin to enter the realm of world literature and to have an equal dialog with foreign literatures.

This first difference determined the second difference that sets Chinese and European comparative literature apart, and that is that French and European comparative literature emphasizes the use of the empirical methodology to describe the actual relationship between the various literatures of Europe and their channels of dissemination, whilst from the very beginning, China's comparative literature carried a strong consciousness of contrast or cross-referencing between Chinese and foreign (and especially Chinese and Western) literature. What European comparative literature stressed was the connection between the various literatures of the European states and their similarities, whilst China's comparative literature emphasized, apart from similarities, the differences and the contrasts. Viewed from this perspective, the main thrust of European comparative literature in the early period was on "endorsement," not on a "comparison" of difference, whilst the main thrust of the early period of Chinese comparative literature was on a "comparison" of difference and not on "endorsement"; what it emphasized was a recognition of one's own strengths and shortcomings through the process of comparison of difference, and in the process of revealing oneself, to learn from others.

The difference between these two modes of birth and development hints at a further level of difference between Chinese and Western comparative literature, and that is that European comparative literature is conducted within the specific, homogeneous European cultural domain. For a very long period of time it was a type of internal regional comparative literature, whereas Chinese comparative literature from the very beginning was a comparative literature between the two alien cultures of China and the West; it was born against the grand backdrop of world literature and from its inception it transcended regional boundaries and possessed a broader global literary vision. When comparative literature emerged in France in the latter part of the nineteenth century as a scientific discipline, its fundamental objective was to tidy up and study the international relationship between the various literatures of Europe. Right up to the 1930s when Paul Van Tieghem in his *La Litterature Comparée* theoretically scoped and summed up the experience of French comparative literature, his vision remained fixed within the confines of European literature. There are many reasons for this: the first is that the French school defined the comparative literature discipline as the study of the history of literary relations and this type of research could only be conducted between the literatures of the various states of Europe. To transcend Europe, because any real chain of literary exchange and dissemination was as yet unformed or still in the process of formation, it was still relatively difficult for it to become an object of empirical research. What is more, from the point of view of the language tools of the French and other European scholars of comparative literature, the number of scholars who were proficient in non-European languages and at the same time had

the capacity to undertake literary research one might say were as rare as phoenix feathers or unicorn horn and therefore for them to expand their research horizons to beyond European literature, although they may have had the inclination, they were powerless. In any case, what they concentrated on was mainly the task of rendering other cultures the same as their own culture, as Frédéric Loliéesought in his work *Histoire des littératures comparées des origines au XXe siècle,*[1] which made it even more difficult for European comparative literature to become a comparative literature that was based on a multicultural foundation. By the 1950s, thanks to the vigorous growth of parallel research and the entry of some scholars from non-Euro-American bloodlines (and especially scholars from Russia, Japan, and India), many more global elements were added to Western comparative literature and a new scholarly space was opened up, especially with the addition of the not-so-directly-related supra-timespace themeology research and interdisciplinary research. However, due to the restrictions of the West-centrist ideology and the limits of language itself, comparative literary research between alien cultures that belong to different cultural matrixes continued to fail to see any true progress.

Having been launched at the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese comparative literature after the 1920s began to gestate as a type of science. Despite the fact that, due to temporal and political constraints, Chinese comparative literature on the mainland in the 1960s and 1970s remained in a state of submersion, nevertheless the discipline took the lead and prospered in Taiwan and Hong Kong and surged to the forefront of Chinese comparative literature development. The mainland scholarly scene, whose scholarly enthusiasm and creativity had been suppressed for many years, in 1979, with the advent of reform and opening, suddenly burst forth, and comparative literature, as one of the most open and progressive branches of science, experienced a rapid renaissance and meteoric advance. The rise of Chinese comparative literature at this time had its own momentous historical significance. As everyone knows, the period around the 1980s was a period when the world entered more comprehensively and deeply into an era of globalization. The demand for multicultural coexistence formed a sharp contrast with imperialist cultural hegemony and cultural fundamentalism. There was an urgent need for people from different cultural systems for mutual understanding, engagement, and dialog. The first role of literature is to study man, and as a field of intercultural literary research, comparative literature played a unique role in promoting mutual recognition and understanding between the people of different cultures and thus displayed even more profoundly its importance.

In reality, the questions that mankind faces today are still the same common problems that he has encountered many times throughout history: such as questions of life and death, love and desire—in other words questions of the harmonious existence of the individual, both mental and physical; issues of power relations and status recognition—in other words, questions of the harmonious coexistence of

[1]English translation by M. Douglas Power, *A Short History of Comparative Literature from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, published 1906 in London by Hodder and Stoughton.

different people; questions of the relationship between man and his external environment—in other words of the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. The pursuit of "harmony" in these areas have been the common aim of human culture both ancient and modern, Chinese and foreign, and it has also been the common pursuit of the literatures of these different cultural domains. If we deeply understand the musings of the literatures of the different cultures over these common quandaries and persevere in implementing an interactive literary exchange, then we might be able to save people from the current unidirectional, impoverished, and biased globalization ideology and create an alternative globalization based on a multicultural foundation. Therefore the distinguishing characteristic of the third phase of comparative literature is firstly a matter of "mutual cognition," "complementarity" and "interaction" between the literatures of different cultural systems.

The reason why Chinese comparative literature is able to represent the quintessence of the third phase of global comparative literature, in the first instance is because, as a developing country, China cannot possibly become a practitioner of imperialist cultural hegemony but instead will continue to go all out to promote pluralistic cultural development. Secondly, China has a long cultural history, a profound cultural legacy, and represents an inexhaustible resource for literary research between alien cultures. Thirdly, China historically has had a long and deep experience of cultural exchange with India, Japan, Persia and other countries; in the last century, the Chinese people have diligently learned from foreign cultures and languages and the cumulative effect (including sending a large number of students to study abroad along with visiting scholars) means that the Chinese people's knowledge of foreign countries (including linguistic and cultural training) generally speaking far outstrips foreigners' (and especially European and American) understanding of China. This has enabled China's comparative literature to be placed at the forefront of the peak in literary research between alien cultures in this new era. Fourthly, by making the "harmony in diversity" value system as the centerpiece of modern comparative literature, China's comparative literature has added constructively to the achievements of the various modern schools of comparative literature from around the world. At the beginning of the 1930s, Van Tieghem's *La Litterature Comparée*, and Loliee's *A History of Comparative Literature* were both translated into Chinese by outstanding scholars very soon after their publication. By the end of the twentieth century, the number of Chinese translations, edited works and publications of foreign works on comparative literature and collections (including Russian, Japanese, Indian, Korean and Brazilian) have already amounted to several dozens, the number of articles analyzing and appraising foreign comparative literature amount to several hundred, and the vast majority of China's comparative literature teaching materials include special chapters on the evaluation of foreign comparative literature. Perhaps there is no other country on earth that has paid more attention to or so enthusiastically engaged in introducing and utilizing the experience of foreign comparative literature than has China's scholars. And finally, I should point out that history and philosophy has been consistently linked in China's traditional culture and that the four arts (zither, Go, calligraphy and painting) as

well as dance and drama between them provide a comprehensive suite of possibilities for cross-disciplinary literary research.

In sum, we can say that twentieth century Chinese comparative literature possesses a deep historical foundation as well as a clear international and pioneering character. It accepted the influence and dissemination of the empirical research of the French school as well as the influence of the parallel and interdisciplinary research of the American school. It summed up the experience of our forebears, and smashed through the narrowness of the French and American comparative literature West-centrism, enabling comparative literature to go all out for engagement between the literature and academic culture of East and West, and from different angles and in different fields, guide comparative literary research into a brand new third stage of comparative literary development.

Representing the first phase of development of the world's comparative literature, French comparative literature pioneered the dissemination and influence research methodologies, featuring empirical textual enquiry. On this point, China has its own unique history of research. As an example, China's millennium-long consistent and persistent translation of Indian Buddhist literature and Buddhist sutras bequeathed a rich legacy of resources for China's comparative literary research. Following the 1920s, Xu Dishan, Chen Yinke, Ji Xianlin, and others introduced the empirical research methodology of comparative literature into the history of the relationship between Chinese and Indian literature and, whilst pioneering research into the history of the relationship between Chinese and foreign literature, demonstrated the richness and capacity of China's comparative literature empirical research and contributed the first academic results in China's research into the relationship between Chinese and foreign literature. The history of the acceptance of foreign literature by China's modern comparative literature during the entire twentieth century, the breadth of its scope, and the depth of its influence, is unique in the world. Apart from this, the dissemination and influence of Chinese literature in the various nations of East Asia, including Korea, Japan, and Vietnam over a long period of time, also offered a vast space for empirical research into Sino-foreign and East Asian literary relations research. Therefore, in twentieth century Chinese comparative literature, empirical research into the history of literary dissemination and of the relationship between literatures has not only been abandoned, but on the contrary, its harvest has been one of the most substantial. Chinese scholars have used the traditional Chinese scholarly insistence on evidence-based statements and textual criticism that involves tracing things back to their roots in conjunction with comparative literature's cross-cultural view and methodology, and has strongly irradiated the vitality of this research, and the academic results which have emerged in the field have adopted the academic style of its rigorous and scientific rock-solid propositions, along with its undeniable scholarly value and the longevity of its academic life.

After the 1950s, American comparative literature which represented the second phase of development of global comparative literature, broke through the French school's practice of confining comparative literature to a discipline concerning the history of literary relations and advocated parallel research and cross-disciplinary

research between literature and other disciplines which had no factual connection and achieved tremendous results. Chinese comparative literature had its own original rewards in this respect. Wang Guowei's *A Review of* A Dream of Red Mansions in 1904, Zhou Zuoren's *Russia and China in Literature* in 1920, Mao Dun's research into Chinese and Northern Europe's mythology and Zhong Jingwen's *Genres in the Folk Tales of China, India and Europe* in the 1920s, and in 1935, Yaozi's *Reading* Romance of the Western Chamber *and* Romeo and Juliet and more constituted the forerunners of parallel research in China's comparative literature. Later, Qian Zhongshu's *Chinese Poetry and Chinese Painting*, *Reading* Laocoön, *Synaesthesia*, *Our Sweetest Songs* and Yang Zhouhan's *The Function of Prophetic Dreams in* The Aeneid *and* A Dream of Red Mansions along with *Chinese and Western Poems of Mourning* and more are paragons of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary research. In the 1970s, the practice of polynomial parallel linking research as represented by Qian Zhongshu's *Limited Views* are even more groundbreaking examples of the parallel research model. Naturally, in the process of development there are twists and turns as well as backward eddies. For example, in parallel research people purposely sought out a new understanding and new recognition of Chinese literature and culture, and moreover, whilst making a parallel comparison, they attempted a more advanced scientific determination and positioning of Chinese literature. However, regarding the question of what is able to be compared in the implementation of parallel research, such scholars from the previous generation as Chen Yinke very early raised some questions, and after the 1980s, when parallel research was in the ascendency, the phenomenon of comparing "X and Y" or totally irrelevant matters appeared, which, after it was criticized by such masters as Ji Xianlin, China's parallel research began to progress more successfully. "Cross-disciplinary literary research" was also questioned, with some asking "Is it the study of literature's relations with other disciplines or does it mean using the methodology and approach of literary research to approach other disciplines?" In truth, it is easy to see how these two points can be combined or applied to its opposite. Meanwhile, others believe that comparative literature can only be seen as such when it is both "cross-discipline" as well as "cross-cultural." Nevertheless, "Cross-disciplinary literary research" continues to advance circuitously and in 1989 China's Social Sciences Press published the work *Cross-Disciplinary Comparative Literature Research* which tentatively revealed the achievements of China's comparative literature in this respect. In a preface to this work, Professor Yang Zhouhan noted: "We need to adopt an 'interdisciplinary' research approach: we not only need to transcend the linguistic barriers between nations, but we also need to transcend the boundaries of disciplines, and from the prospect of this expanded cultural background, examine literature."

Apart from this, we should mention Wang Guowei's trailblazing at the beginning of the century where he approached comparative literature from another angle. He adopted externally originating ideological methodologies to illuminate Chinese literature. He used Western terminology and concepts to interpret and expound *A Dream of Red Mansions* and used Chinese poetry, represented by Qu Yuan, along with Song and Yuan dramatic works and more in a vigorous attempt to marry these

external ideological concepts with China's native works of literature. Whilst he did not make many direct comparisons, nevertheless, compared to a superficial direct comparison, Wang Guowei's comparative literature analyses were more imbued with a cross-cultural international literary flavor, and reveal a type of innate "We can find jade in the rocks of others' mountains" notion of comparison and for this reason, he was able to delve more deeply into comparative literature itself, and from this, open up the springs of elucidatory research for Chinese comparative literature. To use the literary theory of culture A to elucidate the literary works of culture B and vice versa is a bidirectional elucidatory process that occupies an extremely important place in China's cross-cultural literary research—to the extent that some scholars from Taiwan have pointed out that elucidatory research is the hallmark of the "China school."

To sum up, Chinese comparative literature has not merely passively accepted disciplinary concepts from abroad, but in fact has attempted to make its own decisions, based on its own history and through its own unique research. As the third phase of development of international comparative literature, Chinese comparative literature is not a branch of some externally originating school. It has sounded its own unique voice, demonstrated its own unique reflections and revealed its own intrinsic features and made an incontrovertibly unrivaled contribution to the world's comparative literature.

In recent years, Chinese comparative literature has developed along the path outlined above, opening up in the process several new domains which are demonstrated in the following ways:

First, new analysis of the theories of the discipline. Chinese comparative literature scholars have integrated the practice of Chinese comparative literature and actively probed the new concepts and theories of comparative literature which transcend East-West cultural research in the era of globalization and have progressed the concepts of comparative literature somewhat in the process. For example, its advocacy of the multicultural coexistence and complementarity concepts of "harmony in diversity"; its emphasis on difference, mutual recognition, complementarity and harmonious coexistence and through literature, promoting the coexistence of global cultural diversity; the establishment of some basic theories on literary exchange between different cultures; and probing the mechanism and methodology of the discourse used in the East-West literary dialog, and more.

Second, the establishment of the new discipline of literary anthropology. Literary anthropology is the magnificent achievement of intersecting research between literature and anthropology. It is an extension of "comparative research into Eastern and Western mythology" as well as being one of the liveliest new fields that China's cross-disciplinary comparative literature research has generated in the twentieth century. From 1991 to the present, the "Anthropological Interpretation of Chinese Culture" series has published more than 80 million words successively, including anthropological interpretations of such ancient Chinese classics as *The Book of Poetry*, *The Songs of Chu*, *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, *The Book of History*, *Shuowen Jiezi*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* and many more. Referencing the international cultural context, the series offers an extremely

original cultural and anthropological interpretation of these difficult to understand ancient classics.

Third, translation has emerged as an independent discipline. China is a translation giant which not only has more than two millennia of experience, but also leads the world by a huge margin in terms of the number of individuals engaged in the practice as well as the number of works translated. According to statistics, in the first decade of the twentieth century, translated works of literature occupied four fifths of the nation's total literary output. Today, the various categories of translated works occupy almost one half of all published goods in the country. Literary translation differs from normal textual translation in that it is not simply a matter of a conversion of textual symbols, but a transmission and reconstruction of cultural concepts. Literary translation cannot exist independently of the translator's literary re-creation and the duty of a translator is not only to creatively reconstruct the original meaning, but he also needs to "in places where it is impossible to communicate, create the capacity for communication." In other words, it not only needs to transmit the foreign language, but also to develop the native language in places where the two languages intersect. For this reason, works which have been translated into Chinese should be an important integral and indispensable component of Chinese literature and the history of literary translation should be an important branch of the history of Chinese literature. This has already been commonly accepted within China's comparative literature circles.

Fourth: the meeting of overseas Chinese and diasporic literatures. In recent years, research into the literature of the Chinese people has not only included works written in Chinese by foreigners, but also the literary works of overseas Chinese and their descendants using a variety of languages. The focus of this type of research is literary imaginings which observe and analyze encounters, clashes and fusions between different cultures as well as using these works as a kernel and unfolding a dialog with the cultures of alien countries and mutual interpretation between different cultures. In the last few years, this type of research has quickly merged with the international probing of "diasporic literature" which takes the works of diasporic authors as its subject. Scholars of this area not only strive to incorporate the Western theories of diasporic works, but by summing up the theories and practice of Chinese diasporic writing, it has engaged directly with the international scholarly community in fruitful dialog. China is a significant contributor to the world's migrant population and has been so for a long time and this type of research will certainly offer an irreplaceable contribution to the re-writing of world literary history into the future.

Fifth, regarding the tidying up of literary relations. Qian Zhongshu very early pointed out: "From an historical perspective, the first task in the development of comparative literature for every country is to tidy up the mutual relationship between their own literature and that of foreign nations, and study the mutual influence between one's own authors and those of foreign countries." In recent years, the greatest advance in the relationship between Chinese and foreign literature has been the analysis of twentieth century Chinese and world literature as a single entity, comprehensively studying the interaction between the continuation of

China's traditional culture and the influence of Western cultures as expressed in the works of twentieth century Chinese writers. The publication of the 15 volume cross-cultural case study book series *China's Modern Writers in the Cross-Hairs of the Ancient and Modern, China and the West* is a clear example. Research into "Chinese literature abroad" has also seen remarkable progress. The twelve volume work, *Chinese Culture and Foreign Authors* is undoubtedly a major scholarly triumph of the twentieth century. Professor Ji Xianlin believes that the cumulative heritage of the long history of China, India, Persia, Japan, Korea and the Arab countries forms an enormous and abstruse, independent paradigm of literary theory, but unfortunately those pursuing research into literary theory invariably "know the West but not the East," which is a great regret. In recent years, there has been new and heartening progress in research into the comparative literature of the East. In addition, comparative poetics, research into the literature of the cross-cultural ecology, imagology research, and research into the comparative literature of China's ethnic minorities and more, have chalked up impressive achievements.

The burgeoning of comparative literature in China has brought a series of profound changes to our scholarly culture. This is principally expressed in the expansion of the research horizon, the discovery of new objects of research and the renovation of literary concepts and methodologies. In literary research on the subject of literary theory, literary criticism and literary history, it is even more so. *China's Ancient Literary Treatises in the Purview of Modern Scholarship*, *The History of the Acceptance of Modern Chinese Literature*, *The History of the Acceptance of Ancient Chinese Literature*, *Multiple Literatures, Multiple Literary Theories, Multiple Literary Histories*, *The History of China's Literary Translation*, and especially the six volume *China's Culture of Symbols*, the eight volume *The Image of China: Western Theories and Traditions* and others are all examples of this.

In sum, China's comparative literature constitutes the third phase of the world's comparative literature. Its basic spirit is to promote understanding and equitable dialog between the cultures of different ethnic groups. It is both opposed to "cultural hegemony" as well as "cultural fundamentalism" and consistently holds aloft the banner of the spirit of humanity in order to work together to realize cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary engagement, protect multiculturalism, and build a multi-polar and balanced world. Looking to the future, we hold great hope for the future of China's comparative literature and that of the world. Our summation and description of the twentieth century history of the comparative literature discipline is that through a combing through, stock taking and evaluation of the relevant traditional scholarly heritage, we need to further activate China's native scholarly traditions, and at the same time, offer the comparative literature of the new century sufficient sustenance and deserved enlightenment from the traditions of the last century in order to ensure its healthy further development.

Not to mince words, mankind is currently experiencing an unprecedented and extremely unpredictable new era. Under the shadow of global "unification," promoting heterogeneous cultural development, strengthening the understanding and tolerance between peoples, and opening up and broadening all channels of communication is perhaps the only hope for saving human civilization. I believe that,

grounded in China's cultural heritage and as an integral part of the third phase of international cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary literary research, China's comparative literature will in the future play a unique role in doing away with the ideology of globalism and improving the dispersed, isolated and marooned conditions that postmodernism has created.

Chapter 35
An Alternative Globalization on the Basis of Reflection and Negotiation

Address to the Paris "Interactive Cognition between East and West" International Scholarly Conference

35.1 The Appearance of the "Imperialist" Globalization Trend

People have dreamed that the twenty-first century would be a more peaceful and prosperous new century than the twentieth, however they have suddenly been faced with the serious prospect of wars and violence that threatens all mankind. The work *Empire* (Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt) published in the year 2000 noted that Empire no longer distinguishes between nation states and that the responsibility for ruling mankind has fallen on the shoulders of the superpower's imperialist system. Soon thereafter, a whole series of American rightist works gushed forth, and what they all emphasized was: all nations must seek to maximize their power, therefore it is impossible to have a mechanism to balance power and that the best defense is attack. What they sought was a "unipolar twenty first century," thus it is necessary to "prevent a new competing great power from emerging," "actively promote the transformation of America's armed forces and wars," and "maintain leadership in cyberspace and outer space," etc. They believe that the world order "must be established on the foundation of the paramount position of America's unparalleled military might," and on this basis comprehensively implement their so-called "freedom and democracy." Their "great new imperialist war strategy" is first to steal a march on others, to promote the concept of limited sovereignty, show contempt for and revise international norms, and herald the arrival of a so-called "era of post-nationalism."

The world is thus divided into two camps: on the one hand are those who are implementing or endorsing unipolar rule, or those who capitulate to the awe of America's might, while on the other are those who oppose unipolar rule, who support a multipolar equilibrium, who struggle for multicultural progress, and who form an alternative globalization camp. Given these circumstances, a number of questions need to be reassessed.

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35.2 The Different Meanings of "The West"

In the past, we have customarily seen the West as a single monolithic concept, but this is not the reality. There are great differences between Europe and America. With careful analysis, several large European powers have all experienced the acme of imperialist power and Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and other great European powers have all been colonial powers and must have learned some lessons from their experience of the collapse of the colonial system and of imperialist demise. A considerable number of European countries themselves have experienced two world wars and have a relatively deep understanding of the catastrophe that war can bring to mankind. The European peoples believe even more strongly in the ability of the state to organize and to control and have an especially deep skepticism of the ability of the market to regulate. They are also much less blindly optimistic about technical progress. Europeans are more inclined towards a system standard that is based on social unity, respect for the integrity of the dignity of the individual, and call for an increase in the role of the United Nations on the basis of reducing military power, and the establishment of effective world governance, etc. These things are all very different to the ideas of America and especially the extreme right wing in America. These differences perhaps give the European powers a distance that offers the opportunity for reflection as Habermas and Derrida's jointly authored article "On European Renewal" states, the above reality is conducive to renouncing Euro-centrism, acknowledging a global pluralistic culture and the possibility of soon implementing Kant's idyllic expectation of a "world government."

The recently published work *The European Dream*[1] made quite a brilliant analysis of the difference between the pursuits of the Europeans and the Americans. The author argues that what "the American Dream" emphasizes is: every individual has the unfettered opportunity to pursue success (this word in the American vernacular is basically equivalent to "economic success"). What the "American dream" concentrates on to a large extent is individual material accumulation and rarely focuses on the broader human welfare. Thus it is not able to adapt to an increasingly risky, pluralistic, and interdependent world. On the other hand, the "European dream" concentrates on collective relationships and not merely on individual autonomy, on cultural pluralism rather than reduction to a singularity, on the quality of life rather than the accumulation of wealth, on the pursuit of sustainable development rather than on unbridled material increase, on "deep play" rather than monotonous protracted labor, on universal human rights and the rights of the natural world and not simply giving prominence to property rights, advocating global cooperation rather than the practice of unilateralist hegemonism.

Today, many Americans still believe that history is stable and irreversible. They believe in the process of unrestrained material linear progressive development and stress that in a democratic society the highest dream is the unrestricted

[1]Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

accumulation of wealth by the individual. Europeans, meanwhile, tend more to stress quality of life and its sustainability, cherishing stability, and harmony. They believe in a sustainable civilization based on the quality of life and not unlimited material accumulation, that what is important is not individual material accumulation but rather self-cultivation. What Europeans stress is mainly not the accumulation of wealth, but human spiritual elevation. The authors of *The European Dream* passionately declare: "What the European dream seeks is a broadening of human empathy and not territorial expansion. Beginning from the early part of the eighteenth century, human nature has been bound by the prison of materialism, and the 'European dream' will release human nature from this prison and into a brand new and radiant future that is motivated by idealism." The author of *The European Dream* is an American and his argument perhaps carries his own bias, but his analysis of the difference between Europe and American is still pertinent.

In China, many remain intoxicated with the process of "lineal development of unlimited material progress" and are dreaming American dreams of the unfettered accumulation of wealth. They believe that America is more youthful, more prosperous, more energetic, and has more technical and economic management capacity. Thus, even though there is much resistance, the number of young people planning to travel to America to study far outnumbers those that are applying to go to Europe. There is also a group of people who even believe that American domination of the world is an inevitability, and even that this might not be a bad thing. Just as Qin Shihuang's unification of China brought great social progress, it is possible that the "benevolent hegemony" that America claims it is practicing on the globe might even have a similar effect. The hundred years or more of history of the twentieth century shows that it is not very likely that there will be a unified perception of the "West," but today, as all Westerners are going through a period of reflection, a time when they are recognizing themselves anew, Chinese people should obviously also discard their habitual fogginess and separation and rediscover the West and at the same time, rediscover themselves.

35.3 Know the West and Yourself Anew

The West's relatively comprehensive questioning and reflection on itself began as early as the end of the nineteenth century with Oswald Arnold Gottfried Spengler's *The Decline of the West: Outlines of a Morphology of World History.*[2] By the twenty-first century, this reflection was already quite penetrating. For example, the famous French thinker and academician of the Social Science Academy, Edgar Morin, notes: "The well-being of Western civilization carried within it the seeds of its own demise, that its individualism contains within it the isolation and loneliness

[2] *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, Gestalt und Wirklichkeit; Welthistorische Perspektives, 1918–22, 2 vols.

of self-centeredness; its blind economic development brought moral and psychological lethargy and created a disconnectedness in all domains, restricting people's capacity for wisdom and leading people to be hamstrung when faced with complex issues, unable to recognize basic or overall problems. Science and technology has prompted social progress but at the same time, it has brought environmental and cultural destruction, creating a new inequality, etc., and replaced the old style slavery with a new style. Urban pollution and scientific ignorance have especially brought a sense of anxiety and endangerment to people, leading them towards nuclear annihilation and ecological death."[3] The famous American scholar, Richard Rorty, published an article entitled "Humiliation or Solidarity?" in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in which he stated: "Such an upsurge of [European] idealistic self-redefinition would be responded to around the world, in the US and China as well as in Brazil and Russia… Both Europe and America contain many millions of people who see clearly that, despite all that America has done for the cause of human freedom, its assertion of a right to permanent hegemony is a terrible mistake."[4] The Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, in his *Modernity and the Holocaust* stressed even more strongly the fact that in the West, high culture and extreme barbarity are in fact interlinked and very difficult to differentiate… Modernity is the result of modern civilization, and when highly developed modern civilization goes beyond the range that man is capable of regulating, then this leads to extreme barbarity.

What is even more worth noting is the fact that ordinary Western citizens all have a new consciousness. At the "World Social Forum" which has been held annually in Brasil's Porto Alegre on three consecutive occasions since 2002, their catch cry has been: "The World is Not a Commodity" and "An Alternative World is Possible"! They argue that what mankind needs is a multipolar and balanced "social world," an open-minded, civilized and pluralistically developing coalition. To achieve this goal, mankind's spirit needs to experience a "massive elevation of the innate nature of the human mind" and it expresses a different kind of global expectation, of global multipolar balance and pluralistic coexistence, and at the same time, "a sustainable civilization that is based on quality of life and not on unbridled individual accumulation of wealth" as dreamed of by the author Jeremy Rifkin in his work *The European Dream* and discussed above.

The Chinese situation differs from this; however for more than a century, no matter whether in respect of the West or of China, we have lacked any consistent, balanced and thorough-going reflection. For a long time, China learned from the Soviet Union: "Today's Soviet Union is our tomorrow." Since the 1980s, we have looked to America as an example of freedom and democracy, development and prosperity. Chinese intellectuals at times have seen the West as excessively perfect,

[3]Edgar Morin, "Au–delà de la globalisation et du développement, société–monde ou empire–monde?" Revue du MAUSS 2/2002 (No 20), pp. 43–53 URL: www.cairn.info/revue–du–mauss–2002–2–page–43.htm.

[4]Richard Rorty, "Humiliation or Solidarity?" in Daniel Levy et al. (eds) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations After the Iraq War*. pp. 39–40.

while at others as an "alien species" which is inferior to China. For example, at the end of the nineteenth century, Liang Qichao toured Europe and returned to write the work *Mental Images from my European Trip*. He believed that Europe was experiencing a great crisis and that it needed to use China's "spiritual civilization" to "rescue the West from its materialistic exhaustion." Currently we are still able to observe the various permutations of this type of thinking.

In fact, what we are seeking is not any "rescue" by one culture of another. Even less are we seeking an eclipse or subjugation of one by another. Rather, it is the preservation of pluralistic coexistence, and protecting the natural development of the cultural ecology. This multivariant coexistence is one of the mainstays of China's traditional culture, "harmony in diversity." "Diversity" refers to the coexistence of different objects; however it does not mean a static existence of each in their own isolation but rather a mutual recognition, adoption and complementarity through continuing dialog and exchange and by each in their own unique way affirming man's common existence. This is a mutually engaged and continually changing, dynamic coexistence. This is what is meant by "和" [harmony]. Thus the meaning of "和" is not fully translated by the English term "Harmony" ("和而不同" is normally translated as "Harmony in Diversity").

For more than a century, Eastern and Western cultures have coexisted in China. The influence of Western culture on China has been tremendous and in certain respects it has eclipsed Chinese culture. The recent 14 volume series *A History of the Spread of Western Philosophy into the East* which has won state awards has relatively comprehensively summarized the influence of the West on China's humanities across the past century. In 2005 the 15 volume *Case Studies in Cross-Cultural Engagement Series* was published and which summarized how major Chinese writers absorbed and interpreted Western culture in the process of Chinese cultural development throughout the twentieth century and how they helped create for China a new culture. At the same time, a huge volume of the latest and most valuable Western works, including art and music as well as visual media, is being translated and introduced on an unprecedented scale. The number of foreign scholars who are researching and translating Chinese culture is also unprecedented. Of these, a considerable number believe that Chinese culture, as an unknown "other," is not only able to offer a completely new perspective from which to assist Westerners to recognize themselves even better, but as a culture that is completely different from that of the West, is capable of offering completely different ideologies and methodologies from that of the West and which are able to assist this chaotic world.

It appears that world culture is poised to enter a completely new era, the core mission of which will be to establish a multipolar, balanced, mutually beneficial and symbiotic multicultural globalization. Only this type of globalization is capable of guaranteeing the continued improvement in the quality of human existence as well as a sustainably developing, peaceful and harmonious world.

Chapter 36
New Opportunities in Twenty-First Century Literary Research

Literature undoubtedly occupies an important place in promoting self-awareness in Eastern and Western cultures, in shaping a new future, creating a new symbiotic multicultural blueprint and in the process of "elevating massively the innate nature of the human mind." No matter whether viewed from the real need to preserve ethnic cultural difference, construct a multicultural globalization, and strengthen the dialog between different cultures or to take Western and Chinese literary research to a new stage, literary research is everywhere faced with new challenges and new opportunities. We will now discuss this from the following different angles.

36.1 The Needs of the Age

The great challenge facing man in the twenty-first century is the unprecedented and exceptionally monstrous and cruel relationships that have appeared between nature, mankind, the individual, communities, and states. This situation has already meant that mankind has encountered crises which have never been seen before and dangers that are becoming more and more common. If we wish to resolve these problems, we cannot rely on violent revolution or wars, nor can we rely on bloody oppression and resistance. The two world wars, the "proletarian dictatorship" of the Soviet Union, China's Cultural Revolution and the Iraq war and more have already offered us too cruel a lesson. Edgar Morin believes that mankind already has no other choice but to recognize clearly the common and indivisible destiny of mankind (including the unity and indivisibility of all those disciplines that have already been separated out) in order for us to peacefully and happily continue to coexist. In order to achieve this result we need to broaden and encourage tolerance and charity, understand the complexity of mankind, extend the open-mindedness of the individual, establish a concept of earth culture, clearly recognize the multiple possible forms of democracy, institute a democratic and equal dialog, cultivate a consciousness and morality of global citizenship, and more.

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In order to realize this ideal, then in the process of realizing equal dialog and cultivating a consciousness and morality of global citizenship, no matter whether raising mankind's spirit, broadening his sympathies, uplifting human nature, revering nature, being concerned for one's fellow human beings… All of this is where the fundamental content and mission of all the literature lies, and the literature unquestionably performs this special role in an irreplaceable manner. Outstanding literature cannot fail to probe questions that are common to humanity. What mankind faces today are the same old shared questions that he has encountered many times throughout history, such as questions of life and death, love and desire, i.e., questions of the mental and physical harmonious existence of the individual; questions of power relations and acknowledgement of identity, i.e., questions of harmonious coexistence between people; questions of the relationship of man with his external environment, i.e., questions of harmonious coexistence of man and nature. Pursuit of this type of "harmony" has been the common aim of human culture since time immemorial, both in China and abroad. It is also the common foundation of literary research. The reason why interdisciplinary literary research between two alien cultures is possible is because dialog between alien cultures, along with exchange and understanding, is more readily realized through the literature. The foundation of literature is "emotion." Ordinary mortals have seven emotional states (joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate, and desire—the *Book of Rites*) and six desires (life, death, hearing, sight, appetite, and smell—Gao You's notes to the *Spring and Autumn of Master Lü*), and the literature involves human emotions and intelligence with relatively little regard for utility. The common themes of the literatures of different cultural systems are extremely rich, including such things as "an awareness of death," "a consciousness of life," "the ecological environment," "man's final days," "Utopia" or "thoughts of escaping the world," and more. People of different cultural systems all offer their own responses to these questions according to their own different lifestyles and modes of thinking. These responses reflect the echoes of an ancient historical tradition while at the same time being subject to the choices and interpretations of modern day man and the contemporary context.

Any great work of art reveals certain common facets of human experience and engenders in the admirer a sympathetic response. It simultaneously represents the personal experience of the artist himself, the individual imagination and the individual's belief. When a great work of art is being created, no matter whether or not the artist wills it, it always begins from one's own culture and unavoidably carries the flavor of its own culture. And when it is being interpreted, the reader on the one hand brings their own cultural prescience with them while on the other, because of people's perceptions and comprehension of shared experiences, they break through the estrangement that otherwise exists between different cultures and generate a new exposition. This is mutual recognition, complementarity, and mutual affirmation between multiple different cultures. Mutual recognition refers to the recognition, understanding, and appreciation of the literature between different cultures. Complementarity means adopting the strengths of another and supplementing one's own inadequacies whilst at the same time, taking one culture as a point of reference

and interpreting the text of another culture, resulting in achieving a completely new interpretation, understanding and fortification of that text. Mutual confirmation, meanwhile, means identifying common problems in the process of mutual certification, confirming their common nature or confirming their dissimilarities in order to reach a greater understanding and engagement. Through mutual recognition, mutual affirmation, and complementarity between a range of different cultural systems and with multiple two-way dialogs, mankind's shared problems are capable of achieving a comparatively comprehensive solution and at the same time, we will be able to open up an even broader horizon and prospect for discussion regarding these questions and people's thinking and emotions will thereby achieve engagement and understanding. Although literature has always had these functions, nevertheless, the huge changes in the world that mankind is facing today provides literature with new content and raises literature to the status of principal protector and sustainer of a pluralistic and symbiotic new humanist spirit and raises the importance of literature to unprecedented heights. It is especially with the convenience provided by the online environment that the literature makes the swiftest, most free, and most wilful exchange of spirit and thought, along with shared resonance, possible. Literature therefore has become entrusted with an unprecedented new and important meaning.

36.2 Transformation of Literary Research Itself

Confronting the immense turbulence in the world, the development of literary research itself has entered a brand new period of transformation.

First, from the point of view of world literary theory, in the early bourgeois period, people had already invested heavily in the potential for free trade to deliver liberation of the individual and spiritual autonomy, feeling that to a certain degree, after breaking away from the drudgery of physical labor and poverty, mankind would have space for liberation and independence. Occurring at this same time was the sudden rise of the passionate and unrestrained romantic tide. However, contrary to earlier expectations, mankind descended into an unprecedented and sudden divided world of rich and poor, and the unstoppable pursuit of development had already become the sole meaning of existence itself. Unbridled accumulation of wealth and satisfying one's greed became the goal of life and the vast majority of people became bound in hopeless and monotonous mechanical labor in order to survive. The grip of money on human nature replaced the earlier capitalist promise of its liberation.

As mankind's most sensitive nerve, literary workers cannot but face these questions. The first to touch on and reflect these realities was modernism. The modernists could not but harbor feelings of hurt, despair, anxiety and nostalgia with respect to the grand narrative that the European Enlightenment had constructed, including material progress, the irreversibility of linear progress, the ability to know objective reality, the ability to pursue the perfection of human nature and other

"modern" impossibilities, and this became the main focus of modernist literature. Postmodernism which rose to prominence in the 1960s was different. It believed that all of the above-mentioned phenomena were the result of the implementation of the grand European Enlightenment narrative and argued that this type of command style grand narrative did not incorporate a multi-perspective and multi-faceted meditation on the condition of human survival. It always attempted to create a utopian illusion of the future unity of human action and shackle human nature to the modernists' "sole correct path" mode of thinking. What the 1960s generation resisted were precisely these grand blueprints of every conceivable shape and the utopian concept of prescribing how people should live and act. Postmodernism believes that there is not only one way to view the world, but rather there are many and that every individual's life and thought is a narrative mode and that each has its own legitimacy. Moreover, there is not just one ideal, but rather every ideology has its own value. The power of cyberspace has now greatly strengthened the post-modern mode of thinking and acting. Postmodernists threw themselves into a battle to sweep aside the modernist ideological foundation. The modern deconstruction movement that they instituted has already silenced all power based, and mandatory, uniform thinking, and at the same time caused everything to become fragmented and superficial, finally leaving behind a scattering of modernist thought and a noisily clamoring splintered world in which everyone's story is just as convincing as the next and just as valid and equally deserving of acknowledgement. Postmodernists have razed the ramparts of the modernists to the ground; however they have not offered a blueprint for life going forward. In a world where there are no boundaries, and which is full of chaos and disorder and is collapsing and falling apart, people have become wandering existentialist tribes, roaming around in a desperate search, vaguely thirsting for something to savor, something worth believing in, but also not understanding what that might be. Despite the fact that man's spirit has freed itself of its old ideological fetters, nevertheless everyone is forced to search for their own path alone. In truth, although postmodernism planned to smash all architectures of authority, still it did not suggest any new blueprints, nor did it plot out a new era. It merely analyzed all of the defects in modernity and exposed and comprehensively smashed its grand narrative. We might say that both modernism and postmodernism were anticipating a new transformation.

In fact, hints of this transformation have already been revealed in the West. The newly published work by Jeremy Rifkin entitled *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream* points out that we currently stand at a crossroads where postmodernism intersects with the emerging era of globalization and provides a middle ground that links the two eras. He believes that, following the emergence of economic globalization and imperialist hegemonism at the intersection between the twentieth and twenty first centuries, the world has already revealed an expectation for a different kind of globalization, namely cultural globalization—the construction of a multipolar balanced globalization, a world of pluralistic coexistence. Rifkin's "American Dream" refers to the opportunity for every individual to pursue unbridled wealth and pays scant attention to the broader issue of human well-being. The "European Dream,"

on the other hand, stresses quality of life, sustainability, stability and harmony. To Rifkin's mind, the "European Dream" is a type of new historical view and that according to this view, in a sustainable civilization that is based on quality of life and not on unbridled wealth accumulation; the modern development model which is based on materialism will be revised. The aim of a sustainable global economy should be the linking of humanity's production and consumption with the capacity of the natural world and through recycling and renewable resources, the continuous reproduction of life of a high quality. Under these types of sustainable and stable economic conditions, what is important is not individual material accumulation but self-cultivation; not the amassing of material wealth, but an elevation of the spirit; not territorial expansion, but an expansion of human empathy. As the two pillars of the "European Dream," multiculturalism and global ecological consciousness in many respects is the antidote to the modernist ideology. They concede that the experience and aspirations of every individual have equal merit. They liberate human nature from the prison of materialism, and believe that the earth itself is most worth caring for. This is the blueprint that is capable of concentrating energies into the future. Naturally, to our mind, this is far from the reality of Europe and is merely the utopian imaginings of a handful of Americans that are dissatisfied with the current situation. But it actually represents a new type of thinking and direction and is fermenting a new transformation in literary research and cultural production. The current Oscar nominees which are not works on wealth and privilege, but rather small-scale productions steeped in realism and a return to human nature, are a clear signal.

On the one hand, Chinese literary research is unable to divorce itself from the above tide, but on the other, it has its own special development trajectory, the most unusual aspect of which is that its main thrust has, from the beginning, developed in a process of mutual acknowledgement, complementarity, and mutual confirmation between the cultures and literatures of China and the West. Some argue that in the past century China's traditional scholarship has already been ruptured and that it is caught in a state of aphasia. In fact this is far from the truth. As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, Wang Guowei pointed out that Chinese learning and Western learning are bound together. One's prosperity benefits the other. Also, one's decline harms the other. Once the trend (of exchanging what one has for what one has not) is begun, they gain from each other. Moreover, as we are living in today's world and teaching today's knowledge, Chinese learning cannot flourish if Western learning does not prosper, and vice versa. In 1907 Lu Xun pointed out: "Both introspection and knowing others is required—awareness comes from careful comparison"[1] and Wu Mi and others raised the "Promote national essence, integrate new knowledge" standard. In discussing the multitude of Western literary trends at the beginning of the twentieth century, Mao Dun practiced sublation; Guo Moruo

[1]See Shu-ying Tsau and Donald Holoch (trans) Lu Xun, "On the Power of Mara Poetry" in Kirk A. Denton (ed) *Modern Chinese Literary Thought—writings on literature 1893–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 99.

went further and stressed his "poetic awakening" which was inspired by English poetry and completed after re-reading China's classic poetry. Chen Yinke summed it up nicely: "To be able to truly form one's own ideological system and be creative, one must on the one hand adopt the theories entering from the outside whilst on the other, never forget the status of your original ethnic group. The attitude that these opposite yet complementary elements form is evidenced in the true spirit of the Daoist teachings, the old pathways of the new Confucians, and two millennia of intellectual contact between our people and other peoples." All of the famous Chinese scholars who have made a major contribution to modern studies such as Zhu Guangqian, Zong Baihua, Qian Zhongshu, Liang Shiqiu and more have proved this conclusion by their life's achievements. What is regrettable is that in the past century, the research and conclusions that we have conducted along this real developmental path have been woefully inadequate and the number of works which has been able to successfully combine the ancient and the modern, the native and the foreign in elucidatory research has been too few. Naturally, during this 100 year period, Chinese literary research could not avoid being subject to the negative influence of such intellectual trends as "total Westernization," "total Sovietization" or "totally turning back the clock." These influences need desperately to be cleared out. In a word, from the point of view of the development of China's century of literary research, we are currently anticipating a comprehensive reckoning, a type of brand new acknowledgement; in other words, a new transformation, a transformation that takes us from a singular literary research trajectory to one that sees a meeting of the ancient and the modern, China and the West.

As we have noted above, from the point of view of the development of Chinese and Western literature itself, following the incremental progress of many trends in literary thought, and especially following the progress of modernism and post-modernism, after being spurred on by the sharp clash of the ancient and modern, Chinese and Western cultures, Chinese literature research has, over the past one hundred years, accumulated a wealth of experience and today's literary research will now, on this foundation, take note of the current international cultural context, return to its origins and step out once more. As Levi Strauss argued: A pure and holistic knowledge set cannot be sourced from a specific political reality or state of an epoch, but only through a search for the source and a return to "unsullied and uncorrupted nature." Similarly, Chinese literature, as the famous Chinese author Ge Fei concluded from his own creative experience, "The whole of China's modern and contemporary literature can admittedly be seen as a process of learning from external entities, and at the same time, an even more concealed process of recall. In other words, a process of reaffirmation of tradition."[2] On the one hand it is a spatial coordinate. As Fei Xiaotong put it: associating with the world either willingly or unwillingly whilst being subject to the super positioning and squeezing of the "mechanistic" and "information" cultures. On the other hand, it is also a temporal coordinate, as Ge Fei stated, a more concealed process of returning back to

[2]Ge Fei, "Hanyu xiezuo de liangge chuantong," *Wenhuibao*, Dec. 3, 2005.

tradition. There is an urgent need to sum up the past 100 year experience of China's literary development on the warp and weft of these coordinates, and the 2005 Beijing Publishing Group published the 15 volume *Case Studies in Cross-Cultural Engagement Series* in an attempt to longitudinally present the linking up of these traditions and in the same year, the Ningxia Publishing Co. published the 14 volume *Foreign Culture and Chinese Literature* with a view to linking up Chinese and foreign culture and literature are a tentative attempt in this regard.

To be honest, no matter whether it is literary research or creation, present-day individuals have all stemmed from the soil of traditional culture and at the same time, are living contemporary lives and receiving contemporary education, so materially or spiritually they all to a greater or lesser extent are subject to external influences. For more than a century, Chinese culture has at every moment been in constant touch with externally originating cultures. The criss-crossing of the ancient and modern, Chinese and foreign has been manifest in extremely complex cycles of reciprocity until currently under the new dispensation and according to new needs, it is time for a more systematic and deeper interpretation. All of this has provided new ideas and conditions for the development of contemporary literature. From this it can be seen that amid the tremendous changes taking place in the present world, literature is an extremely important link, and at the same time, this course will in the future offer new opportunities for development and innovation in literary research and thus fundamentally change the structure of contemporary literary research.

Chapter 37
New Humanism and Postmodernism

Postmodernism, which arose in the 1960s, addressed the deficiencies in modernity by saying that there is not just one approach to view the world, but rather a plethora of approaches, and that each individual life and thought has its own narrative mode and authenticity. Nor is there simply one ideal, but rather there are many, each with its own value, and the formidable power of cyberspace greatly strengthens the mode of thinking and actions of post-modernism. Post-modernists immersed themselves in a struggle to root out the foundation of the ideology of modernity. The modern deconstruction movement that they mobilized has already had the effect of eclipsing all unilateral thinking based on power and compulsion, and at the same time causing everything to become fragmented and superficial and finally leaving behind a scattering of modernist thought and a noisily clamoring splintered world in which everyone's story is just as convincing as the next and just as valid and equally deserving of acknowledgement. Post-modernists have razed the ramparts of the modernists to the ground; however they have not offered a blueprint for life going forward. In a world where there are no boundaries, and is full of chaos and disorder and is collapsing and falling apart, people have become wandering existentialist tribes, wandering around in a desperate search, vaguely thirsting for something to savor, something worth believing in, but also not understanding what that might be. Despite the fact that man's spirit has freed itself of its old ideological fetters, nevertheless everyone is forced to search for their own path alone. Although late twentieth century post-modernism aimed at smashing all architectures of authority, still it did not suggest any new blueprints, nor did it plot out a new era. It merely analyzed all of the defects in modernity and exposed and comprehensively smashed the grand narrative of modernism. By the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, some scholars proposed a marriage between the

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achievements of the first Enlightenment and post-modernism, calling for "A second Enlightenment", with the aim of escaping the trap of modernity. Their advocacy roughly included the following few points:

37.1 Transcend Homo-Centrism and Promote Ecological Consciousness

They believed that "Man is but one species in a cast of thousands. He is no better or worse than any other. He has his place in the ecological system and he only has value in so far as he contributes towards that ecological system". The famous ecologist Thomas Berry argues that man is the center of the universe, that his heart is closely tied to the natural world and that his sacred duty is to be engaged with the universe and care for the earth and sky. This is exactly as Zhu Xi noted: "Heaven is Man and Man is Heaven. The birth of Man was of Heaven. Heaven gave birth to Man and Heaven is within Man." "Heaven" must be manifest through "man". Only through a creatively free, pragmatically independent "man" who is in communion with "heaven/nature" can heaven/nature's vivacious ambience be truly revealed. Jeremy Rifkin also believes that Asians have always stressed the harmony between man and nature. If we say that the foundation of the West's Enlightenment science was to "remodel nature", to mold it to man's likeness, then the East's method is to reject any notion that man can manipulate his environment and instead, to regulate oneself according to the basic needs of his environment.

37.2 Value the Concept of Cultural Complementarity

If we say that the catch-cry of the first Enlightenment was the "liberation of the self", then that of the second Enlightenment was respect for others and for difference. Multicultural complementarity, and especially East-West cultural complementarity is the main thrust of the new humanism. As Rifkin says, the two great spiritual trends of today are: First, in an increasingly materialistic world, a thirst for some sort of higher individual calling; Second, in a society of increasing alienation and coldness, a quest for some sort of common consciousness. He believes that this is the common pursuit of men of acuity in both Europe and China. To his mind, both Europe and China are dreaming of a brand new era in which the rights of all individuals are respected, where cultural difference is welcomed, where all people enjoy a high (but not extravagant) quality of life within the context of a sustainable world and that mankind is able to live in stability and harmony. In order to coexist in an increasingly closely connected world, humanity needs to continually exploit new concepts and in this way, China and Europe will discover even more and deeper points in common.

37.3 Reject Abstract Freedom and Embrace Responsible and Thoroughgoing Freedom

The post-modernist thinker Alfred North Whitehead believes that man is a product of society and when the individual uses his personal freedom to impair the common fabric of society, the result is that he will certainly also impair himself. The new humanist spirit inserts responsibility and duty into the concept of freedom and shows how freedom and duty are internally linked. At the end of the twentieth century, in the French town of Lille the World Citizens Assembly called for another Citizen's Treaty to be concluded, one separate from the international United Nations Treaty and the Treaty for Human Rights, and that would be a World Treaty of Responsibility.

37.4 Transcend Mechanistic Reason and Embrace Esthetic Intelligence

Mechanical reason renders it difficult for people to cast aside action and motivations with a utilitarian purpose. Esthetic intelligence is a type of integrated thinking which is built on a foundation of organically connected concepts and which takes the harmony and unity of truth, goodness, and beauty as its purpose. Here, scientific, rational, emotional, religious, and artistic thinking are all able to find mutual complementarity and mutual enrichment. Under the influence of the binary opposition mode of thinking, modernist reason is predicated on the rejection of the value and beauty of sentiment and emotion, whereas esthetic intelligence stresses a harmonious mode of thinking. Whitehead states that both the Chinese and Greek people achieved a certain level of civilized perfection and both deserve to be applauded. However, while they may be admirable, they cannot be duplicated ad infinitum. If a civilization wishes to maintain itself with its original passion, then what it requires is more than scholarship. It cannot get by without a spirit of daring. And this so-called spirit of daring is the pursuit of new perfection.

In the final analysis, the world is undergoing rapid change and according to the predictions of science, this change is "exponential". In other words, the speed of change will gradually increase. From the Qin-Han to the beginning of the Republican period, social change in China was not great, however having entered the twentieth century, the change has been increasingly astonishing and remarkable. All exponential processes of physics lead to the collapse of systems and presage their demise. If we agree that this inference is basically true, then how should mankind approach this course of society that is speeding up by the day, and how should we respond to the tremendous life changes as we approach the turn of the century? Since Western Enlightenment science's attempt to "remodel" nature, and the method of making it accord with the features of man have been proven to have failed, then adopting the Eastern methodology, abandoning any notion that man is

able to control his environment and once again adjust himself according to the demands of his environment, can perhaps still be considered a feasible option. This means that we first of all need to change our view of life and of the world, and rebuild mankind's spiritual world.

J. Rifkin in a letter to his Chinese readers at the time of the publication of his *European Dream* states: "As we age and look back on our lives, we will realize clearly that the important moments in our life are those that have nothing to do with material accumulation, but rather those moments that are closely bound up with our adoration of our fellow human beings, our relationship as individuals with humanity in general, and our relationship with this planet that we inhabit! The European Dream which is currently unfolding attempts to open the gates and this will lead to even more momentous questions regarding the meaning of life. As inhabitants of this globe, what is the real meaning and aim of our existence in the twenty-first century?"

Chapter 38
A Few Thoughts on Comparative Literature and World Literature

The world has entered a pluralistic and changing era. History is no longer an object of research that is predetermined as linear, arranged in an orderly manner, with a set structure and an ultimate meaning. Rather, it is an open text that displays unlimited difference and plurality, like a "web-like life that is woven of dotted lines" (Foucault) and that is constantly changing. This type of change has obviously provided a completely new perspective on the ideal of resisting the unipolarization and homogenization of culture and at the same time establishing a foundation for the development of a multicultural world. It has also provided a completely new perspective for literary research.

38.1 New Changes and New Reflections

In the face of these tremendous changes, many discerning Western scholars in their reflections on history and their probing of current reality have offered new theories in response to which we will mention a few examples below.

1. Complex thought. The renowned French thinker Edgar Morin pointed out that the fortune of Western civilization carried within it the seeds of its own demise, that its individualism contains within it the isolation and loneliness of self-centeredness; its blind economic development brought moral and psychological lethargy and created a disconnectedness in all domains, restricting people's capacity for wisdom, and leading people to be hamstrung when faced with complex issues, unable to recognize basic or overall problems. Science and technology has prompted social progress but at the same time, it has brought environmental and cultural destruction, creating a new inequality, etc., and replaced the old style slavery with a new style. Urban pollution and scientific

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ignorance have especially brought a sense of anxiety and endangerment to people, leading them towards nuclear annihilation and ecological death.[1] He believes that we need new and complex ideologies to confront this new and complex situation.

2. The mutual subjectivity cognitive style. The French philosophers as represented by Francois Jullien believe that under the present circumstances, we should return to our own cultural roots, closely reexamine history and look for a new point of departure. This requires a new "other" to facilitate referencing and look again at your own history and culture. In his famous article *Why We Westerners Cannot Avoid China When Studying Philosophy* especially stressed the fact that we should comprehensively get to know ourselves, which we should get away from the closeted self and construct a type of external viewpoint and that China, which is currently constructing just such an "external viewpoint," is the best example. At the "Pluralistic beauty" international scholarly conference convened by the Research Center for Comparative Literature and Culture at Peking University, the great French master of comparative literature, Professor Daniel-Henri Pageaux pointedly stated: "François Jullien's research on Greek and Chinese culture is a good example. It corroborates precisely the benefits manifest by the process of 'revisiting' via an 'other' which I have already spoken about."
3. Constructivist post-modernism. Looking back at the end of the twentieth century, following the malady of postmodern social fragmentation, superficiality and alienation, constructivist postmodernism advocated at the beginning of the new century new proposals based on A.N. Whitehead's process philosophy. Its core ideology was an organic, holistic and systematic concept, holding that "there is no such thing as a constant, invariant entity, only persistently changing relationships." We should not look on man as the center of everything, but rather we should see man and nature as a "living symbiotic entity." The "constructivist postmodernist" advocates John Cobb believes that this type of organic, holistic and systematic concept has "deep" resonance with much of China's traditional ideology. For example, he argues that "China's traditional culture has always been organic holism," and as an example he says that modern Western thought begins with division and categorization and that modern medicine differentiates between pathogens and healthy cells. They separate the pure from the impure and destroy the impure. China's *yin-yang* theory on the other hand begins with the unity of opposites and therefore Chinese medicine seeks balance, and not division and purity. Western medicine's therapies are acts of destruction, while Chinese medicine speaks of the harmonization of the part and the whole, causing a body's inner strength to reach equilibrium. He says that the *Book of Changes* stresses "change" and "the way of life," which agrees precisely with Whitehead's stress on "process." He firmly believed that the future direction for

[1]Edgar Morin, "Au-delà de la globalisation et du développement, société-monde ou empire-monde?", Revue du MAUSS 2/2002 (No 20), pp. 43–53 URL: www.cairn.info/revue–du–mauss–2002–2–page–43.htm.

philosophical development lies in the complementarity and blending of Eastern and Western cultures.

4. Redefining Literature and Humanism. Professor Armando Gnisci of Rome University in Italy in his work *La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation* states: "[We] must begin from the point of view of a changing and developing world and, to be accurate, from a 'postcolonial world' that we are all connected to, and redefine literature and humanism. This direction may perhaps precipitate a type of global, multilayered new humanist formula. This formula will no longer be one that European culture forces on others on the pretext of reason and universality, but rather one which is built on a dialog between the different cultures of the world who 'speak together,' or as we say in Latin, a *colloquium*." He believes that as far as those former colonies who had thrown off their European colonizers are concerned, the discipline of comparative literature represents a type of decolonizing understanding, research, and realization methodology. Moreover, "to all we European scholars, it [comparative literature] represents a type of reflection, a form of self-criticism and study or perhaps a means of liberating ourselves from our own colonial mentality… It involves a kind of self-criticism and a lesson to ourselves and others, a transformation. This is a type of *askesis*."

   The expansion of the above, to various degrees, constitutes an important reference for contemporary literary research, and especially comparative literature and world literature research.

38.2 What Is World Literature?

The current enthusiastic discussion among a large number of scholars over world literature is a reflection of the new ideological perspective outlined above. In the past two years, the quarterly journal *Chinese Comparative Literature*, published in Shanghai, has organized special columns in a number of issues to discuss world literature and these have offered a number of different and brilliant ideas.

To my mind, the concept of world literature that Chinese scholars have used in the past has largely been an extension of the definitions of Goethe and Marx. The former stressed that world literature was an aggregate of the outstanding works of all ethnicities, while the latter stressed "a world literature formed by the literature of a considerable number of ethnicities and regions." Against the background of capitalist expansion, the "considerable number" of the past became "one type," i.e., a type different to the original, a comprehensive style new world literature. Times have changed and these two definitions appear to have a certain number of deficiencies. Some Chinese scholars believe that the world literature of Goethe and Marxism and the view of it being a type of literary reality would be better described as a beautiful ideal and a precious utopia. These scholars believe that, unlike Goethe's concept of it being merely a collection of outstanding works that bear no

relationship to one another, world literature was rather an organic combination of mutual recognition, mutual affirmation, and complementarity, tinged with a hint of comparative literature. Nor is world literature like Marx and Engels imagined, a new alloy of many types of literature melded into a single entity, but rather a community of different literatures that are preserving and developing their own distinguishing characteristics, drawing sustenance from other literatures and making continuing contributions to other literatures.

Chinese scholars from the very beginning took some different directions whilst probing world literature. It began in 1907 with Lu Xun's "On the Power of Mara Poetry." In this essay, Lu Xun raised the proposition that "We must first know ourselves, and also know others." "To know oneself" is obviously the most important. For example, while discussing the influence of Byron and Shelly's Satanic School poetry on Russia and Eastern Europe, what he first focused on was: "As different as had been the thought of the Slavic peoples from that of Western Europe"[2] and therefore "the transferal of Pushkin's affections away from the Byronic hero to the ordinary people of his ancestral land,"[3] pointing out that this is "a result of the dissimilarities in the national characters." Lu Xun noted that Byron and Shelly's influence in Eastern Europe was substantial. "Reaching all the way to Russia, where they [i.e., the influences of the above] gave rise to Pushkin, national poet of his people; when they reached Poland they created the poet of vengeance, Mickiewics; and upon entering Hungary, they awakened the patriot-poet Petöfi."[4] However, Lu Xun's commentary on this influence is not a simple summarizing, and even less is it a simple "reduction to a single entity," but rather he advocated the preservation of the difference in the literature of all ethnicities and at the same time how to extract benefit from the interaction between different literatures.

Following Lu Xun's train of thought, the first President of the Chinese Comparative literature Association Yang Zhouhan suggested that when Chinese study foreign literature, they must first of all adopt the soul of a Chinese person, or in other words, they must first of all understand themselves and have a thoroughgoing cultural grounding so that they are able to ensure that their research into foreign literature has a special Chinese flavor and that China's literary theory, methodology and habits of appreciation adhere to this unique reading as it gradually emerges onto the world stage.

Professor Chen Sihe of Fudan University also has his unique take on world literature. As early as 1991, he outlined "the international elements in Chinese literature." He argued that Chinese literature "entered the ranks of world culture with its own individual face and thereby enriched the content of world culture. In this type of research perspective, Chinese literature in conjunction with the literatures of other countries, from a position of equality, jointly constructed a complex world literature mode." He also stressed the fact that "After the Chinese literature

[2]Lu Xun (Mara. Kowallis p. 48).

[3]Lu Xun (Mara. Kowallis p. 49).

[4]Lu Xun (Mara. Kowallis p. 70).

factor had been inserted into the general background of international literature, the entire world view that Westerners originally preferred ought to be changed". Some of his suggestions are a good fit with the current discussion on world literature. He has not only undertaken a deep theoretical analysis, but he has also spared no effort to discover just such a "global factor" in literary practice. The "remorsefulness," "fiendishness," "survival consciousness" and more that he frequently spoke of all demonstrate to varying degrees the universal values that different cultures contain. These values find different expression according to the unique characteristics of one's own culture and through a comparative literature channel of mutual recognition, mutual affirmation and complementarity, achieve new and different types of progress. In August this year, the 10th Annual Chinese Comparative Literature Conference, an international conference, was held in Shanghai. At that conference, some scholars questioned the concept of the "global factor". I believe that if we do not attempt a fundamental understanding, then assuming an emphasis on difference, variation and networking, there will be no doubt that "global factors" can exist. Naturally, this question still awaits deeper discussion.

Perhaps in the process of discussing world literature, some young Beijing scholars can suggest some new ideas. They especially stress a dynamic and open attitude. As the paper "The liberation of literature" emphasizes, in today's globalized world, "literature" must be "the world's." The "objective counterpart" and "intended object" of "literature" is the world. The world is not only "a temporal and tangible reality," but "the world's existence has a palpable happening quality." In other words, the world is "delineating boundaries": "the world" is constantly manifesting, sustaining and changing itself. They believe that we must change our previous customary immutable mindset that divides the subject and object and stress the fact that everything is in flux and changing, in the process of formation. Another essay "What 'world,' what 'literature'?" stressed even more clearly the fact that the world and literature are both in a constant state of flux. As Mikhail Bakhtin argued, the culture of others can only reveal itself completely and deeply in the eyes of the culture of others (and yet not completely because there may be yet another culture arrive and they may discover even more and understand even more). Only after one meaning encounters and crosses swords with another will its own deep-down true details be revealed. Thus, "the debate over world literature is in fact an enquiry into the construction of the international literary ecology in a pluralistic context and a promotion of the formation of a value concept and standard of literary diversity in the world's literary ecology". In other words, world literature is a constantly developing literature in a constantly changing world.

38.3 Comparative Literature and World Literature

The world is diverse and culture is even more diverse. Recognizing this diversity and allowing difference to be manifest amidst mutual collisions, and achieving new development through mutual importation and benefit, this is the true meaning of

comparative literature. As modern concepts, comparative literature and world literature are mutually affirming and mutually generating partners. The two exist in a type of dynamic relationship of construction. In today's globalized world, national literatures cannot be studied in relative seclusion and isolation as in the past, but rather must inevitably be infused with the new elements of comparative literature and world literature. In other words, the inter-subjectivity, mutual referencing, bidirectional elucidation and other epistemological and methodological principles of comparative literature irresistibly smashed the self-imposed limits of national literatures and opened up the new pathway of fusing together research on national literatures, comparative literature and world literature. On the other hand, comparative literature was no longer confined to its former framework, but instead increasingly laid stress on research into the continually changing theories, relationships and dynamics of the literatures of all nations. In other words, it placed particular emphasis on studying such new questions as the constantly changing "common literary traits," "common cultural traits" and the heterogeneous space.

In this sense, can we say that a dynamic world literature is the object of comparative literature and that without world literature as its object, then comparative literature loses its *raison d'être*? Thus comparative literature is a guide to world literature and contributes to the aggregation and variation of world literature. Without the epistemology (interactive cognition) and methodology (mutual recognition, mutual affirmation and complementarity) of comparative literature, then world literature would find it difficult to develop such that it would merely constitute a meaningless pile of materials or a dish of scattered sand.

From a factual point of view, comparative literature indeed offers world literature real possibilities: with cross-cultural, cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary literary research at its core, comparative literature, and especially translation, has taken national literatures from their relatively closed status and made them genuine works of world literature. They have also become an important part of the literature of other countries, or in other words, a special form of national literature. As Professor Zhang Hui of Peking University pointed out, if it were not for Yang Jiang's translations, as far as this Spanish-incapable person is concerned, *Don Quixote* would always remain a stranger and to all intents and purposes, would not exist. Thanks also to Kumarajiva and Xuan Zang or Ji Xianlin and Jin Kemu… the Buddhist scriptures and Sanskrit literature have become a part of Chinese literature —in fact an indispensable part of that literature. Translations of *The Bible*, Shakespeare and more are similar. Moreover, the work of these distinguished translators and scholars is precisely comparative literature work. In other words, it is the addition of new content to the native opus by means of comparative literature of works originating externally, lending them a new international dimension. On the other hand, the native literature, through the auspices of comparative literature, can undertake a new interpretation of the newly introduced foreign literature and thus introduce new and previously unavailable elements to that foreign literature. In other words, a new international quality is added to the work. This is what certain scholars have emphasized: that world literature inevitably emerges from a certain culture and effects a unique interpretation of another literature.

What is worth noting is that during the new century, in China this new spirit of a globalized world literature and comparative literature is permeating every aspect of literary research, including literary theory, literary criticism, literary history, research into classical literature, modern literary research and more and this will undoubtedly bring reconstruction and regeneration to all literary research.

38.4 Questions that We Must Face

In this great era of transformation and growth, we have no choice but to face many as yet unsolved and constantly emerging new theoretical questions. To my mind, the first is whether or not the result of mutual cultural permeation and exchange is able to gradually narrow the differences in the global culture, even going as far as to mix them all up and fuse them such that they disappear? Might accepting influence from outside one's cultural orbit mean that the fundamental characteristics of one's original culture are changed? Is it true that because of their differences, cultures "cannot be measured with the same yardstick," to the extent that they are not able to engage with one another? The second is the question of "the self" and "the other" in a dialog. "The other" means "everything that is not me," and we should first pay attention to the differences themselves. Only when these "face to face" differences are revealed comprehensively can the "other" possibly become a reference for reflecting on "oneself". However, solely stressing difference invariably leads to "having nothing to do with each other" and it is difficult to achieve the target of understanding and engagement. If you do not stress difference, then the special qualities of the object will be sacrificed and lead to a convergence of the other and the self. How then should this paradox be dealt with? Next is the even more important question of discourse in the dialog between different cultures. The primary condition for equal dialog is that both sides be able to comprehend and receive, that they have a discourse that can achieve engagement. At present, what developing countries face is in fact a system of concepts that, over many years, the developed world have formed, backed by their formidable political and economic might, and to a certain extent, a system that has already achieved broad recognition. This discourse has, over several centuries, accumulated and concentrated the thoughts of wise men on many human questions and, through interaction with different cultures, become enriched and developed. If we were to cast aside this discourse then it would be difficult to maintain life. However, if we were only to use this discourse and the model that it has constructed to interpret and dissect one's own native culture, then a large proportion of the most unique and innovative features, the living native culture, could, because it does not fit with this model, be discarded, and if this were to actually happen, then the so-called dialog could only be a monolog of a single culture which is complemented by a smattering of exotic materials and nothing more. It would not be able to form a true interactive dialog. How then can a new and genuine discourse that is innovative and conducive to equality be constructed?

Apart from these questions that we have long discussed and yet failed so far to reach a satisfactory conclusion, a number of new questions continue to arise: for example the casual "appropriation" of the newly independent cultures by the powerful cultures. In other words, U.S.-style global multiculturalism or taking their hegemonic interpretation of all cultures as the sole interpretation of global multiculturalism. This in reality continues to be a type of spiritual colonialism and a considerable portion of the West is incapable of viewing equitably, and in fact is hostile towards, other cultures. The recent atrocity in Norway is but one example. On the other hand, how the former colonized peoples can find final liberation from their spiritual colonization also still remains a question. Also, the question of how to sketch out an intercultural written history that transcends space-time boundaries, or the question of the rise of the media and visual culture and the shifts in print culture that China and the world are currently experiencing, as well as the dynamic relationship of the interweaving and mutual composition that is occurring between the two, and similar questions. All of these still await further research and resolution.

In a word, we stand at a period of unprecedented transformation, and people increasingly feel that in the process of building a globalized pluralistic symbiotic ideal world, the role of literature, and especially comparative literature and its companion, world literature, is becoming increasingly important. All of the world's literary researchers must advance, shoulder to shoulder, and redefine literature and humanism, rethink the meaning of human existence and the mode of that existence, and work together in the great enterprise of forging a new world of the spirit.

Chapter 39
The Urgency and Difficulty of Cross-cultural Dialog

39.1 The Long History of Cross-cultural Dialog in China

During the Eastern Jin period (317–410 C.E.), Buddhism entered China and the teaching and propagation of the Buddhist classics as well as the mode of their dialog with the Han culture was "*geyi*." "*Ge*" means to measure and "*geyi*" means that the use of the concepts and doctrines native to Chinese culture to illustrate, interpret and measure the meaning of the Buddhist texts had already produced new understandings. This was a type of "using the self to explain the other" process using the methodology of privileging the "quest for consensus." In the seventeeth century, when East and West encountered one another, the energetic search for sameness in the contact between China and the West played a crucial role, but this already was not the sole mode of cross-cultural dialog. At the time, apart from the "search for sameness," some were already noting "difference" and suggested the "*kuangyi*" methodology. This terminology hails from the instructions of the French Jesuit Nicolas Trigault and his Chinese disciple Zhang Geng's transcription *Kuangyi* (first published in a 1625 Xi'an edition and today kept in the French National Library). This work translated 22 of Aesop's fables and the opening section of each fable was termed the "tale" and the final section was termed the "moral" which interpreted the meaning of the tale. The contemporary Xie Maoming wrote in the postscript to the work: "Taking pity on the ignorance of the peoples of the world, Mr. Zhang offers explanations, from multiple perspectives, of the meaning of these tales." This obviously employs thinking that differs from that of China and in fact introduces new elements into Chinese culture.

Consequently, the dialog between the Han culture and other cultures experienced several centuries of history and in terms of methodology, there has been no alternative besides the *geyi* and *kuangyi* approaches. Over the millennia, there has been both experience and lessons learned, but today we have arrived at a brand new juncture.

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39.2 The Current Urgency of Intercultural Dialog

The reason why we speak of a new juncture is because an unprecedented urgency has been created in the intercultural dialog. This can mainly be attributed to the following factors.

First: Tremendous time-space change. Computers, the global internet, and mobile communication have offered the possibility for intimate connectivity between people anytime and anywhere. Such bioengineering technologies as genetic modification, stem cells, and cloning has meant that life can be reproduced, altered, or selected by human means. What is more, nanotechnology has enabled mankind to exercise control over the microscopic world to a distance of within one billionth of a meter. These revolutionary new advances and new technologies affect every aspect of human existence and have precipitated an unprecedented global shrinking of time-space and have led mankind to a view of time and space which is fundamentally different to that of the past. The new knowledge and technologies have at the same time led to unprecedented consumption and competition over the finite energy and other resources of the world. This is a reality that all of humanity cannot but face together and there are only two possible outcomes of this situation: resistance or dialog. Resistance would lead to a war which would destroy humanity, whilst dialog would lead to harmonious coexistence and peace.

Second: Reflection on the 100 years of experience offered by the 20th century. The two great World Wars of the twentiethth century have left mankind with painful memories. Both Europe and Asia experienced the pain of destruction that crazed modern development wrought. If we add to this the bitter experience of the German anti-semitic fascist concentration camps, the Soviet "gulags," the Chinese "Great Leap Forward and Great Famine" and "Cultural Revolution" and more, all of this demands that we redefine the condition of man and rethink the meaning of mankind's existence and the mode of that existence. This type of redefinition can only be achieved through a global dialog between all ethnicities.

Third: cultural clashes are influencing the future of all humanity increasingly seriously. The cultural fundamentalism that has developed from the sharp antagonism between "cultural hegemonism" and cultural isolationism has already brought the world to the turmoil and instability of the brink of total war. Relying on its own economic, political, scientific, technological, and cultural superiority, the "cultural hegemonists" are forcing themselves upon people everywhere as they plot to unify the world with their own ideology. Meanwhile, the "cultural isolationists" believe that their culture is unquestionably superior, and fear new development, suppress dissident views, oppose cultural interaction, strangle the proactive elements of a search for innovation and change from within their own culture, to the extent that they become obstinate and rigid and tend toward the extreme of belligerence. This extreme is cultural fundamentalism. Its essence is not unlike that of cultural hegemonism; whenever it becomes empowered, it also lords it over others. In order to rescue the future of mankind, the call is echoing from every corner of the globe to demand peace and avoid war, to demand "dialog" and oppose "confrontation"!

Fourth: philosophy's shift in direction. In the past, the Western philosophical order held that the subject and object can exist independently with no involvement with one another. As Russell states, the Descartian system suggested the two parallel and independent spiritual and material worlds and it is possible to study one of these without involving the other. Around the twentiethth century, phenomenology and process philosophy, as represented by Whitehead, successively reversed this trend and led Western philosophy into a new era of interaction between the subject and object. Chinese traditional philosophy has always stressed the fact that the objective world cannot be divorced from the subject. The Chinese Daoist philosophy stresses that all objects are formed in a myriad of changing interactive relationships and indefinite boundless possibilities, and owing to a certain chance happening or destiny, one of those possibilities becomes a reality. This is what Laozi refers to as "Something formless yet complete." All objects are formed from the midst of a formless "primeval chaos," the final conclusion of which is "a return to non-existence." During this process, as the prospect and frame of reference of the subject changes, the objective world reveals a different aspect or face. The subject itself is also changed and because of the different points of reference of the different "others," they each have a different understanding of themselves. The Confucians believed that "Heaven" (the object) and "man" (the subject) were an "inseparable" single entity. As Zhu Xi states: "Heaven is Man and Man is Heaven. The birth of Man was of Heaven. Heaven gave birth to Man and Heaven is within Man." "Heaven" must be manifest through "man." Only through creatively free "persons" who are adequately and pragmatically autonomous and who are in touch with "Heaven" can the vital ambience of "Heaven" be manifest. From this, we can see that Western philosophy moved from the separation of the subject and object to the modern philosophical stance of the unity of the subject and object. They can take Chinese philosophy as a useful "other" and look at themselves again, just as Heidegger interpreted Laozi. Chinese philosophy, meanwhile, through stressing "combination" and "primal chaos," lacked a full objectification of the object, and so created many deficiencies, but in the past century or more, after absorbing and taking reference from Western philosophy, it too has undergone great change, as Feng Youlan and Jin Yuelin's philosophy testifies.

39.3 The Difficulty of Productive Dialog

Naturally there are many different motivations for dialog, including curiosity, interest, and emotion, but as we have outlined above, the productive dialog that we are speaking of is different. This is an innovative and productive intercultural dialog that aspires to fulfill certain expectations, produce certain results and resolve certain questions. And in the conduct of this dialog we cannot avoid encountering the following contradictions and difficulties.

First: the contradiction between the universal and the particular. This contradiction is primarily manifested in the persistence of a group of postcolonial

individuals in clinging to narrow-minded nationalism. They believe that everything that is classed as "universal" is arbitrary and rigid and has a tendency to violent imposition on others. They oppose any structured restrictions, believe that there is no center, that there is no so-called universality and that there is only completely unrelated exceptionalism. They acknowledge the postmodern "concept of superficiality," the elimination of all phenomena and essence, and all relationships between the inevitable and the incidental, the universal and the exceptional, the "signifier" and the "signified" (the so-called referent), rendering all objects devoid of any temporal continuity and as isolated individual objects devoid of any spatial relationships. They only stress difference and ignore general connections. Meanwhile, certain powerful cultures believe that their own culture has universal value and is "valid no matter where on the earth it is imposed," that it is a universal culture that can eclipse all other ethnic cultures. So is there such a thing as universal cultural value?

The "common and the exceptional," the "universal and the particular" are topics that the cultures of the world have long debated. Chinese philosophy very early stressed that "There are three implications of change—metamorphosis, no change and simplifying change." "Metamorphosis" refers to exceptionalism due to changes in time or place while "No change" refers to universal characteristics that do not change with time or space. As early as the Greek period, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* discussed this question and pointed out that the exceptional and the common cannot be separated. Hegel further incisively expounded on this and developed it. In fact the Russian thinker Vissarion Belinsky in the *Literature and Fantasy* put it most clearly. He wrote: "Only by navigating different paths will mankind be able to achieve his common goals; only by living their own unique lives will all ethnicities be capable of making their own contribution to the common treasure-house." In fact, without a common goal (universal value) there is no necessity or capacity for dialog, and without separate and unique lives, there would be no content for dialog, and without any dialog content there would be no words to exchange. For example, democracy can be said to be a type of universal value, but everyone has a different understanding of democracy and of the path to achieving it. China already raised the concept of the people as the basis during the Mencian (372–289 BCE) period: "The people are the most important; the state is the next, and then the monarch." China has followed and developed this ideology until the present day where she, occupying 9.5 % of the earth's arable land (120 million hr vs. 1306 million hr) and with only 31 % of the world average per capita fresh water resources (2201 m^3 vs. 7044 m^3), manages to feed and clothe a total population that amounts to 22 % of the world's total such that 1.3 billion people have the right to survival. This is the greatest victory of China's democracy. As the French scientist Antoine Danchin states, "Before we talk of any rights, we need to understand the 'rights of the stomach'." Naturally, this is just a beginning and our democracy is still far from enough and we urgently need to start from this foundation and through equitable dialog, learn many more things from Western democracy. On the other hand, the Western concept of democracy is also constantly changing. The humanist democratic vision since the French revolution has advocated the limiting of freedom

to that which does not interfere with the freedom of others. American democracy, meanwhile, in certain aspects has ignored this cherished principle and some individuals have gone to extremes, to the extent that, under the name of universality, have used war to export their concept of "democracy." Using this example alone, it is enough to point out as far as the world is concerned, how absolutely urgent it is to truly understand the relationship between exceptionalism and universalism and to open up an intercultural dialog!

Naturally, under these circumstances, a deep divide has opened up between the exceptional and the universal, and this divide is seriously influencing harmony on many fronts and rendering dialog difficult to conduct and for society to advance. A renewal of engagement, a healing of this division, and a restoration of the proper relationship between the universal and the particular is an important link in developing multiculturalism, protecting the cultural ecology and ameliorating cultural conflict.

Second: The contradiction between maintaining purity whilst also being open to beneficial influences in the process of dialog. If one wishes to preserve one's native culture then the more one emphasizes the "purity" and "conservatism" of the various cultures the better. However, different cultures cannot avoid mutual osmosis and adoption. But does this type of mutual adoption and supplementation, where "you are in me and I in you" mitigate against the preservation of the special features and differences of the original culture? Does the result of this type of osmotic interaction mean that the differences between the world's cultures are gradually diminished to the point that they are amalgamated and disappear?

In fact, from the point of view of historical development, the adoption by one culture of some features of another is invariably conducted through the eyes and prism of one's own culture. In other words, it takes place through the filter of one's own cultural curtain and very rarely entails wholesale importation. Mostly, it is a process of adopting what is needed. For example, when Buddhism entered China it expanded greatly, but the Yogācāra school of Buddhism which was quite developed back in India experienced great difficulty in its propagation and expansion because it conflicted with China's traditional mode of thinking. As Chen Yinke pointed out: because the traditional Chinese ethical concepts were incompatible [with this sect], the sections of the Buddhist cannon that "touched on the basics of human sexual intercourse," "even the pious followers could not accept them;" "on the whole they are silent and not mentioned," so "we can only hide the books and prohibit their circulation". The French symbolist poetry's influence on 1930s Chinese poetry was the same. At the time, Jean Rimbaud and Paul–Marie Verlaine's poetry was extensively translated into Chinese and the outstanding representative of the native French symbolist poetry Étienne Mallarmé's influence in China at the time could not hold a candle to the previous two. This all illustrates the earliest choices China's culture made at this early stage of cultural contact.

At the same time, the acceptance by one culture of another does not often mean that it is transplanted across in its entirety. After a culture has been introduced, it will rarely continue to develop along its original path, but will rather, in combination with the native culture, produce new, even more spectacular, results. Greek

and Hebrew culture entered Western Europe and became the foundation stone of Western culture. This was a new culture that was already different in so many different ways from the resident culture. When Indian Buddhism entered China and combined with the preexisting Chinese culture it produced Sinicized Buddhist sects, such as Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan/Zen. These Sinicized Buddhist sects went on to constitute a pivotal juncture in the development of New Confucianism in the Song and Ming periods. This phenomenon of a culture developing in a foreign land and giving rise to a new culture has occurred repeatedly throughout history.

From this, we can see that the mutual influence and adoption between two cultures is not a process of "assimilation" or "amalgamation," but rather a process of transformation into a new entity under different circumstances. This process, depending on the opportunities, choices or conditions for interplay creates new entities, entities that are no longer the "pure" entities of the past, but a new "purity" which is born of the old. It still possesses its own unique "genes" and special features that are not exactly the same as the old entity, nor entirely the same as the other. In other words, the result of globalization and multicultural interaction is not necessarily a process of "convergence" to the point of "unification" but rather a process of mutual elevation and on the new foundation, the creation of new values and new differences. Naturally, this is not to deny the fact that over a long process of social progress some cultures, due to special circumstances, might gradually disappear. Similarly, we cannot deny that in this process people may gradually develop certain common value standards. But even though there may be common value standards, in different regions there will still be different interpretations and different manifestations which, amidst universality, will display their own original exceptionalism.

For a long time, there has been a popular saying in China, namely "the more ethnic something is, the more it belongs to the world." It is not that I believe that this saying is valid. First, so-called "ethnic" things are far from being isolated and immutable. As we have shown above, they must of necessity achieve development through interaction with other cultures. In fact, "ethnic" and "global" are not necessarily separate entities. The former must receive the permission and appreciation of the latter—even to be used by the latter—and in the process of displaying its own unique characteristics; it also needs to consider the expectations of its populace and its acceptance horizon. We certainly cannot rely on the former uniquely Chinese "foot binding" as being capable of acceptance by other ethnic groups and becoming a world sensation. A succinct example of ethnic culture should include two aspects. First, is an "already formed" aspect that cannot be changed, such as the Four Books and Five Classics of the ancient Chinese canon or the ancient bell set or *guqin* [zither] and other ancient instruments which already have an established form. Any change to these cannot be countenanced at all. Second, is that aspect which is constantly changing, such as the different interpretations of the Four Books and Five Classics according to the different historical periods and different melodies and performance styles of the ancient musical instruments. The first aspect means that its purity must be maintained, while the second must rely on dialog and its influence in order to encourage its development.

The famous Chinese scholar Wen Yiduo stressed that in terms of culture, China has always dared to be the receptor and therefore it has avoided decline. Lu Xun also repeatedly pointed out that any ethnic group that does not excel at "listening" will eventually "go from being deaf to being mute," and become what Nietzsche described as an insensitive and uncivilized "last man [German: der letzte Mensch]." Wen Yiduo and Lu Xun were both early advocates of cross-cultural dialog.

Third: The question of the other and the self in the dialog is also an extremely complex question. First of all, when we begin from the point of view of the self, we always seek to assimilate the other, convince them to agree with our own program, accept our way of thinking and eventually become like ourselves. The result of this is simply to sacrifice the special qualities of the other and cause them to converge with ourselves. This type of dialog is not a development of a new "harmony" on a basis of the original "unity in diversity," creating a new richness and growth, but instead everything will be destroyed if harmony is achieved through homogeneity (sameness). The superpositioning of similar objects cannot possibly create the new and will eventually be moribund. Just as Emmanuel Lévinas expressly stressed: we should begin from the point of view of the other, and pay attention to that which the other is least clear about, in fact that aspect that they are least capable of understanding. Only thus, only when we accept that "… everyone that I come in contact with is superior to me in every respect and I will be able to acquire from them an 'other' which holds different views, an 'other' which cannot be imprisoned in any type of thinking." "Only this type of encounter with an 'other' is valuable because the 'other' is everything that I 'am not;' not only because of his temperament, appearance or psychological state, but more importantly because of his difference itself. And it is precisely because of this difference that the relationship between me and he is different to the usual 'fusion or amalgam,' but is a type of 'face to face' relationship." Only when this type of mutual "face to face" difference is fully displayed can the "other" be capable of constituting a reference for me to reflect back on myself.

However, if we only stress mutual difference then we will always encounter difficulty in achieving our aim of understanding and engagement, whereas if we do not stress mutual difference, we will engender the dangers of confusion and amalgamation where the unique features of the other are lost. This type of paradoxical relationship between the other and the self in fact creates the most meaningful and, at the same time, most difficult aspects of a "productive dialog."

Fourth: there is also a question of discourse in the dialog between different cultures. The first condition of equitable dialog is a discourse that both sides are able to understand and accept, through which they are able to achieve engagement.

Huayu [discourse] is not language: language requires that you master the vocabulary and grammar of your target and conduct a dialog that completely accords with the customs and methodology of that target. Discourse is different. Discourse is similar to the rules of a game. When we are participating in a dialog, engaging in mutual interpretation/deciphering, both sides need to observe certain rules and come to a most fundamental acknowledgement, otherwise there is no possibility of engagement. Just as we cannot use the rules of Chinese chess when

we play *Go*. If the rules are different, so play would be impossible and the dialog could only be terminated. In a dialog between two cultures, even though a common language may be being spoken, nevertheless, mutual understanding cannot be reached. This is because no common discourse exists.

In the process of intercultural dialog, the most difficult thing is the formation of a discourse that does not belong completely to the conventions of one side, whilst being capable of being understood and accepted by both sides. Currently, what developing countries are facing is a discourse that the developed world has developed over many years, backed by the might of its political and economic power. A comprehensive system of ideas that has to a certain extent already won broad endorsement, a discourse that has extended to all sectors, including politics, economics, and culture and has for a long time occupied a commanding position and been mobilized widely. This discourse undoubtedly stimulated the progress of underdeveloped regions; however, it cannot be denied that it also suppressed the lifestyle and mode of thinking of these regions and the development of their own native discourses. The recent suggestion of "aphasia" does have some merit, however, to use this to negate the contemporary discourse which has been formed over the past few centuries with the Western discourse at its core and to substitute it with a pre-modern "native discourse," or some sort of "newly created discourse" is not realistic. Certain individuals advocate the "excavation" of a totally "native," completely "unpolluted" discourse, only to eventually discover that this type of discourse does not exist, because cultures are invariably developed in the process of interplay with other cultures. Moreover, even if this type of completely "native" discourse existed, it neither could not either be used to interpret modern life, nor could it be understood by the other party to dialog and thus achieves the aim of engagement. To be honest, the Western discourse itself has experienced centuries of accumulation and compiled the musings of untold numbers of sagely persons on all manner of questions relating to humankind, and moreover, through exchange with other cultures it has been enriched and developed, so to discard this discourse, it would be difficult for life to continue. On the other hand, if we were to only have this discourse and the models that it has created to interpret and dissect our native culture, then, a great swathe of the unique, creative and living cultural traits could be discarded because they do not fit with this set of models, and if this really were the case, then any dialog would cease or perhaps only the monolog of a single discourse would be permitted, supplemented by a spattering of alien materials and nothing more, and a truly interactive and productive dialog could not be established. This difficult discourse paradox is a vital question as far as dialog is concerned.

How then can we escape from this dilemma? The most important thing is to maintain an attitude of equality in the dialog. Quite a number of Westerners do not understand, nor are they willing to understand, the culture of other ethnicities, and they stubbornly, perhaps maliciously, insist that their own culture is superior to that of others, and that they must change and command the culture of other ethnicities. If we are to change this attitude, it cannot be accomplished overnight. One Italian scholar of the phenomenon of cross-cultural literature, Università di Roma's

Professor Armando Gnisci, specifically pointed out that if we wish to transform this "West-centric" thinking, then it must be through a process of *askesis*. In his *Comparative Litaerature as a Discipline of Decolonialization* he states: "As far as we European scholars are concerned, it (comparative literature) actually represents a type of reflective, a type of self-critical and learning format, or we might say it is a means of extricating ourselves from our own colonialist mindset. These are not empty words. The question is that we truly believe that we belong to a 'postcolonial world', and that in this world, the former colonial masters must learn how to live and coexist with the former colonized peoples. The 'discipline' that I speak of has nothing whatsoever to do with the professional domain of the Western collegial system. To the contrary, it relates to a type of self-criticism and an education and reform of the self and [one's relationship/view of] others. This is a type of '*askesis*.'"[1] On the other hand, quite a number of previously oppressed ethnic groups are sensitive to the need to protect their native cultures, leading to conservatism, seclusion and refusing all dialog, with the result that their own culture stagnates and collapses. If we are to eliminate this type of attitude, then similarly it will be a type of "*askesic*" process.

With an attitude of equal dialog, perhaps we will be able to find a "compromise" that the two sides are happy with, a shared common problem that can be discussed from two different cultural standpoints and angles. History demonstrates that great cultural or artistic works always reflect some aspect of a shared human experience and moves its readers to common applause while at the same time it constitutes the author's own personal experience, imagination and philosophy. When great works are created, no matter whether the author is conscious of it or not, they always begin from their own culture and unavoidably carry the colors of their own culture. And when they are read, the observer on the one hand brings their own cultural pre-science with them while on the other, because of people's perception and awareness of common experiences, they break through the distance between the different cultures and create a new interpretation.

For example, questions of human life, death, love, desire, and more are common to both ancient and modern man. Death is something that nobody can avoid. Tao Yuanming argued that "When absorbed by death, there is no happiness or fear; when it is time to end, it will end. There is no point thinking about it," which is extremely magnanimous. Ernest Hemingway believed that the beginning of human life is like a playful little brook. It runs down from the mountain, occasionally throwing up sprays, and kisses all sorts of stones and grasses. Then, it becomes a mighty river and finally, slowly and serenely it melts naturally into the great ocean, passing into eternity. Tao Yuanming and Hemingway are discussing the same question and this creates a dialog between two different cultures. People who come after them can, through this type of literary dialog (despite the fact that the

[1]Armando Gnisci, *La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation*see *Celebrating Comparativism*. Eds. Katalin Kürtösi and Jozsef Pal. Szeged: Attila Jozsef U/Gold Press, 1994. pp. 69–75 or Chap. 2 of Armando Gnisci: *We the Europeans: Italian Essays on Postcolonialism*. The Davies Group. 2014.

languages are different and it must be conducted through translation), and therefore can find a common discourse and can similarly come to some understandings and be inspired. There are many common things in literature, no matter whether ancient or modern, Chinese or foreign, and there are many common topics on which to engage in dialog and many shared impressions over which to initiate exchange. In fact, every great work offers its own response to a common problem according to different modes of existence and thought and these responses echo the long historical tradition of an ethnic group while at the same time are subject to the contemporary interpretation of people of different epochs and different communities. People of different cultures can, via this type of interpretation, undertake mutual exchange and understanding and achieve a common consensus to form a common discourse.

In sum, mankind inescapably faces the urgency of a global intercultural dialog. To advance dialog and to dissolve antagonism is the responsibility of all people of this present age.

Chapter 40
New Thoughts on Ecological Civilization

40.1 The Foundation of Ecological Civilization Is Process Philosophy

Process philosophy is a philosophical teaching that proposes that the world is a process and demands that organic concepts replace material concepts. Its instigator was the British mathematician and logician, A.N. Whitehead. Whitehead divided the objects of the universe into the world of "events" and the world of "eternal objects".

In the world of events, everything is in a process of transformation and the combined entity of all events creates an organic entity, from the atom to the galaxies, from society to the individual, all are situated in differently ranked organisms. Organisms have their own individuality, structure and ability to create themselves.

The fundamental characteristic of an organism is movement, and movement is expressed as process. Process refers to internally linked and persistent creative activity of all the factors in an organism. Thus, the world is expressed as a type of moving process. Behind a process there is no unchanging physical entity. Its only persistent feature is the structure of its motion. Thus, the natural world is alive and vital. Whitehead believes that nature and life are inseparable, and that only the fusion of the two can constitute genuine reality. This is very similar to Wang Yangming's "there is nothing outside the heart": "The flower exists in your heart only. When you see it, there is a flower. When you don't see it, there is nothing."[1]

But the so-called "eternal object" is only a theoretical possibility and is not an objective reality external to people's consciousness. Whether or not it is able to become reality depends on whether it is limited by the object or the subject, and eventually, whether it is finally limited by God. China's Daoist philosophy stresses the fact that the meaning of all things is not immutable, nor are there any pre-set answers. Answers and meaning are formed in the context of limitless interactive

[1]Wang Yangming, "Chuan xi lu".

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relationships and undefined limitless possibilities. Due to a certain chance or destiny, one possibility becomes a reality. This is what Laozi refers to as "Something formless yet complete" (the *Jingmen Guodian* bamboo texts render it "A state [which is] confusedly formed"). All things are generated from the midst of this formless and faceless "primal chaos", which is the meaning of "existence is created from nothing". And the end result of "existence" is "to return to nothing". "Nothing" is "a non-state state, the likeness of nothingness", and this "nothingness" and "non-state" is in fact not really nothingness or non-statedness, because "As a thing the Way is shadowy and indistinct. Indistinct and shadowy, yet within it there is form; Shadowy and indistinct, yet within it there is substance." This "form" and "substance" both exist within "nothingness". But they are still not "actually existing"; they are only a certain type of formless, faceless, as yet unformed potential that is brewing. Given a certain opportunity, this type of possibility can be realized "as the occasion arises". Before this, this reality did not exist, and yet it did. It is a type of "non-existent entity". This is the logic of the statement "All things in the universe are born of existence and existence is born of nothing." This is one level higher than Whitehead's final crediting everything to God in his statement: "The world of events is but one selected by God from a number of worlds which are latent with possibility and therefore God is the fountainhead of the real world."

In sum, in Whitehead's eyes, the natural world was not a defined unchanging thing but instead was a process of continuing change. Time and space cannot be separated; the two are one item, called the "extensive continuum", or in other words, the time-space totality, therefore it is not possible to see the natural world as the sum or an accumulation of objects, but rather as a synthesis or an organic relationship. As far as sensory perception is concerned, he believes that events are the ultimate reality. In this manner, Whitehead formed process philosophy with "sensory perception", "the unity of time and space (extensive continuum)" and "events".

Process philosophy fundamentally eliminated the quandary of the juxtaposition of the subject and object, fact and value that has persisted in Western philosophy ever since the Greek period. In other words, he attempted to comprehensively resolve such metaphysical problems as the thing in itself and phenomena, the one and the many, motion and stillness, the eternal and flow-and-change, existence and creation, mind and matter, determinism and free will which have existed in Western philosophy from ancient times, and notions of value as its core and a "process" that is based on narrative tinged with the colors of production as its means, and form a process philosophy matrix that is capable of melding the two great camps of British and American linguistic analytical philosophy and continental European speculative philosophy.

40.2 What Is Meant by "Deep Ecological Civilization"?

I was first introduced to the concept of "deep ecological civilization" by Professor Zeng Fanren. The principal feature of a century of industrial civilization has been man's conquest of nature. The progress of global industrialization has seen the

culture of man's conquest of nature reach its zenith. A string of global ecological crises show that the planet is unable to support the continued development of the industrial civilization. We need to initiate a new civilization format in order to ensure man's continued existence, and this is the ecological civilization. If we say that the agricultural civilization was a "golden civilization" and the industrial civilization was a "black civilization", then the ecological civilization is a "green civilization". The "green civilization" stresses the fact that "man and nature are a common life unit".

As Prof. Zeng Fanren pointed out, in 1973 the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess applied ecological theories to the realm of human society and ethics, proposing the discipline of "deep ecology". What "deep ecology" is concerned with is not merely what kind of society is able to sustain a specific type of ecological system. This type of ecology is merely a type of value theory, a political and ethical question… But from the point of view of deep ecology, are we able to satisfy such doubts raised by the fundamental needs of humanity as the right to love, security and proximity to nature, and whilst expressing such doubts, are we also calling into question the fundamental role of society? We seek a type of society, education and religion that as a whole is beneficial to all life on the planet and therefore we are probing further how to realize this necessary transformation, a task that we must complete. Prof. Zeng Fanren believes that beginning with Arne Naess, the entry of the concept of "ecology" as a phenomenon from the world of natural science into the social realm of social and emotional value determinations led to the application and birth of ecological philosophy and ecological ethics and aesthetics. What is more, "ecology" added such connotations as "value", "equality", "equity" and "beauty and ugliness" onto the concepts of "holism" and "systematism". As Prof. Zeng Fanren states, it should be the revelation of existence and the manifestation of truth in the interplay between "Heaven, Earth, the gods, and man". ("On the object of the study of ecological aesthetics" Its mode of existence is a type of "shared being". This is a global terminology with many different kinds of patterns and it is through these patterns that all different types of existing objects are offered the opportunity to "share their existence". "Shared being" is predicated on such concepts as "creativity", the "one" and the "many", and "uniformity" and "diversity".

The revolution that the ecological civilization founded on process philosophy ushers in first of all is a transformation of the system of ethical values. Traditional Western philosophy believes that man alone is the subject and that life and the natural world are man's target (of conquest). Thus, only man has a value and other life and the natural world do not, so we are only able to speak of morality with respect to man and there is no necessity to speak of morality in relation to other forms of life or indeed the natural world. This is the philosophical foundation of the industrial civilization where man commands nature. Ecological civilization, and especially "deep ecology", believes that not only is man the subject but so is nature; not only does man have value, but so too does nature; not only does man have agency, but so too does nature; not only does man depend on nature, but so too does all life. Thus mankind must respect life and the natural world and man and other life forms must share one planet. No matter whether it is Marxist humanism or the unity

of heaven and man from traditional Chinese culture, or the West's sustainable development, all demonstrate that ecological civilization is a social pattern that comprehensively unifies the human and the ecological. The principle of ecological harmony with man as the basis is the prerequisite for the full development of every individual.

The second change is the transformation of modes of production and lifestyle. The industrial civilization's mode of production, from raw materials to products to discarded objects is an extremely un-cyclical production; meanwhile the lifestyle is characterized by high consumption based on the principle of materialism and it believes that higher consumption of resources benefits economic development. Ecological civilization, on the other hand, stresses a social model that is kind to the environment and is based on the carrying capacity of the environmental resources, with the laws of nature as its standard, and a sustainable socio-economic culture as it policy strategy. The key to implementing a win-win for the economy, society and the environment is human agency. The human lifestyle should actively adopt the principles of conservation and with an appropriate level of consumption as its hallmark, seek the satisfaction of the fundamental necessities of life, implement a "low carbon existence", not seek any excessive material enjoyment, and esteem spiritual and cultural satisfaction.

40.3 Ecological Civilization and Constructive Postmodernism

At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, the famous ecological philosopher John B. Cobb took Whitehead's process philosophy as his foundation and proposed constructive postmodernism. According to Whitehead, we should not see man as the center of everything, but rather should see man and nature as an intimately related "living community". He criticized the binary thinking of modern Western society and advocated an activist holistic approach. And from this point of departure, he distinctly inserted an ecological dimension into postmodernism, stressing that "Real objects are a type of continually changing stroma. There is no such thing as a never changing entity. On the contrary, what exists is continually changing relationships". He believes that this type of organic holistic systematic concept, "cares about harmony, completeness and the mutual influence of all objects", which is "deeply" resonant with a considerable portion of China's traditional thought. He argues: "Our postmodern era is one of harmonious relations between people and between man and nature", and this era will preserve certain proactive elements of modernity, yet will transcend its dualism, its homo-centrism, and its male dominance and build a postmodern world where the common welfare of all life is valued and nurtured." Cobb believes that constructive postmodernism is relative to deconstructive postmodernism and that in relation to the latter, it shares the common features of rejecting the modernists' dualism and

realist thinking. Deconstructive postmodernism strives to deconstruct the primary narrative that underpins modernism. Their deconstructivist position means that they have scarcely any means whereby to express their opinion directly. They are afraid to admit to anything universal. However, if they persist in a thoroughly deconstructionist stance, then they must eventually deconstruct themselves. Cobb distinctly inserted an ecological dimension into postmodernism, arguing that the postmodern is an era of harmonious relations between people, and between man and nature. This era will retain certain of modernity's positive elements, but will transcend its dualism, its homo-centrism, its male dominance and build a postmodern world where the common welfare of all life is valued and nurtured. He believes that if we accept the ecological world view, then we will be able to develop an economic system that will seek the common welfare of mankind and understand man as a member of the ecological community.

Cobb pointed out that the West's process ideology presents an opportunity to combine the results of Chinese intuition with Western science. Once process ideology is employed by China, it will experience an even richer development than it has in the West because China's traditional culture has been organically holistic all along. He firmly believes that "Once process ideology is applied and adopted by China, it will experience an even richer development than it has in the West because China's traditional culture has been organically holistic all along". He offers as an example the fact that modern ideology begins with division and modern medicine distinguishes between pathogens and healthy cells. It separates the pure and the impure and destroys the impure. China's *yin-yang* principle begins with the unity of opposites; therefore Chinese medicine seeks balance and not division and purity. Western medical therapy is an act of destruction while Chinese medicine speaks of harmony between the specific and the whole, of leading the inner strength of a body to reach equilibrium. He believes that the *Book of Changes*' emphasis on change and "the Way [*Dao*] of life" is in agreement with Whitehead's emphasis on process and what the modernist strategy, which is based on ignoring the community and the ecology, precipitates is destruction. Therefore he firmly believes that the future direction for philosophy is a mutual complementation and blending of Western and Eastern cultures and this too is my own firm belief.

Chapter 41
Looking into the Future

Address on the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary
of the Establishment of Peking University's
Institute of Comparative Literature

In the twenty-first century mankind faces a tremendous challenge and that is the fact that unprecedentedly monstrous and cruel relationships have arisen between nature, mankind, the individual, the group, and nations. The real essence of these cruel relationships is the comprehensive "materialization" of both the material and spiritual lives. Materialism has increasingly displaced idealism, and money's entrapment of human nature has increasingly replaced the early capitalist quest for the liberation of human nature. What originally was a social relationship between individuals has been transformed into a "materialist" relationship between people. Even more serious is that the aesthetic culture which was originally believed to be able to conquer or rise above the crisis of the objectification of society has itself been objectified to various degrees. Moneymaking and utility have become the sole standard for measuring everything. Reason originally was pitted against divine and imperial rights and was a tool that helped humanity win its freedom during the early part of the capitalist period. But today, the calculations and analysis of reason occupy by far the greatest proportion of man's mental activity and his spiritual life has been confined to a tiny range such that it has been "materialized" as well. This cannot but plunge mankind's spiritual life into total crisis, requiring us to redefine the state of man, reflect on what kind of world we need to fashion, what kind of world view and view of life we need to establish in order to respond to this brand new, globally influential and complex situation.

Today, let us take a look at the next decade of development of comparative literature under this formula. I would like to take up three questions that have recently occurred to me. I have no solution. What is important is to broaden our field of reflection.

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The First concerns the question of the universal value of Chinese culture. Every culture has its own uniqueness as well as its universality and all are capable of making their own unique contribution to the solution of the world's challenges. Western scholars have probed this question extensively and among these, many are ordinary scholars and not necessarily sinologists. Take for example the discussion over "The *Tianxia* System." The "theory of empire" which forms the foundation of Euro-American foreign policy has brought three decades of the disaster of war. This has already reached a climax. In 2005, Zhao Tingyang's *The* Tianxia *System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of a World Institution* described a Chinese model for a world order that has universal value. In his view, ancient Greece's transition from "the individual to city state to nation state to international society," this movement from small to large, saw its greatest conceptual unit halted with the "nation-state" and its "international society" was merely a playground for advantage. "*Tianxia*," on the other hand, was an "ultimate" conceptual unit comprising "*Tianxia* to State (feudal vassals) to Family" or in other words from large to small, and considering how to affect harmony at all levels. It believed that every other was an integral part of the ultimate "*Tianxia*" and did not accept that there existed any absolute other that could not be "neutralized" and thus it eliminated any incommensurate and absolute "civilizational clash" which is precisely what our present day world craves —a strategy for resolving cultural conflict. From this, the "*Tianxia* system" as an alternative conceptual methodology to the "imperialist doctrine" which had been in command for so long, gradually became more widely known and attracted the attention of the world's thinkers. For example, the former Chancellor of Hong Kong University, Professor Wang Gungwu, in 2006 delivered a speech entitled "*Tianxia* and Empire" on the occasion of taking up a position as a lecturing professor at Harvard University. In 2009, the acclaimed humanities journal *Diogenes* published an English version of Zhao Tingyang's essay which attracted even more heated discussion. These outstanding non-sinologist scholars argue: "A renovated *Tianxia* theory, this type of 'alternative' way of thinking, might perhaps help us find a path to resolve our existence in a chaotic world situation."

Further new thoughts on instrumental and technical reason. China's culture of rites and music never stressed rational analysis but instead took "*qing* [emotion/sentiment]" as its core. Li Zehou in his recently published *An Outline of Ethics* pointed out that Chinese culture takes "*qing* itself" as "the human psychology consisting of a blend of emotion and reason." Chinese philosophy begins with "*qing*" ("the *Dao* begins with *qing*") and from "*ren* is to love your loved ones" develops the emphasis of "by extending filial piety, love all people in the world" (the *Jingmen Guodian* bamboo texts). These are all innate natural emotions and not "debts of gratitude" which are rationally determined.

An October article in the New York Times stressed that a sole reliance on reason and inference is not capable of creating a beautiful life and the author praised China's "reasonableness and rationality" proposal. Reasonableness is able to make up for any inadequacies in rationality. Just as Heidigger states, mankind should not rely on self-congratulatory invincible scientific reason to analyze and deconstruct one's target because the result will be to actually hide the object itself from view,

just like "deconstructing color into data relating to wavelength—the color would have long disappeared without a trace," this is why apart from rational and technical tools we must stress the reasons for the preservation of "the esthetic realm," "the poetic haven," and emotion. Some scholars like the sinologist Robert Neville focus on one of the two major distinctions between Chinese and Western culture, namely the distinction between "the esthetic order and the rational order." "Despite the fact that Western culture acknowledges both, nevertheless in the Western cultural tradition, the rational order assumes numerous roles in private and public life which in Confucian thought is assumed by the aesthetic order. The great Confucian thinkers are all "aesthetes" and not governed by some superficial rational order in the Western sense."(Introduction to the English edition of *Thinking Through Confucius*). If we return to "*qing,*" this most natural and most fundamental starting point of Chinese culture, and add a new creativity and interpretation, then perhaps we could, in parallel with the Western emphasis on instrumental and technical reason, initiate a new platform which elevates mankind's spiritual world and is centered on aesthetic sentiment.

And more thoughts on constructive postmodernism. Constructive postmodernism is based on Whitehead's "process philosophy" and argues that "There is no such thing as a never changing entity; there is only continually changing relationships," therefore man should not be seen as the center of all things but rather man and nature should be viewed as an intimately linked "life community." One of its proponents, John B. Cobb noted: the core philosophy of constructive postmodernism is the concept of an organic holistic system, "a concern for harmony and completing its mutual alliance with all things." Cobb believes that this type of organic, holistic, and systematic concept has "deep" resonance with much of China's traditional ideology. He argues that "China's traditional culture has always been organic holism," and as an example he says that modern Western thought begins with division and categorization and that modern medicine differentiates between pathogens and healthy cells. They separate the pure from the impure and destroy the impure. China's *yin-yang* theory on the other hand begins with the unity of opposites and therefore Chinese medicine seeks balance and not division and purity. Western medicine's therapies are acts of destruction, while Chinese medicine speaks of the harmonization of the part and the whole, causing a body's inner strength to reach equilibrium. He says that the *Book of Changes* stresses "metamorphosis" and "the Way [*Dao*] of life," which agrees precisely with Whitehead's stress on "process." He believed that the West's process philosophy offered an opportunity to combine the results of China's intuitive and holistic thinking and Western science. He firmly believed that "Once process ideology is employed and adopted by China, it will experience an even richer development in China than it has in the West" and therefore he believes that the future direction for philosophical development lies in the complementarity and blending of Eastern and Western cultures.

The above demonstrates how Western scholars with vision are currently hoping to discover certain universal values from within Chinese culture that will solve some of the world problems that they have encountered. This is not to say that

Western culture is analogous to Chinese culture or vice versa, but rather is a completely new, complementary, and equal cross-cultural dialog that transcends "sameness" and "difference."

Second: new thoughts on world literature. Recently the Chair of Harvard's Department of Comparative Literature David Damrosch's *What is World Literature?* and his edited volume *New Directions: A Reader of Comparative and World Literature*, appeared in succession; the new "world literature" concept that he mooted attracted vigorous debate.

In the past there have been "summation theory" world literature and "exceptional value theory" (e.g., that Shakespeare is world literature), along with Marx and Engels' "integrative theory" ("A national bias and limitation is becoming increasingly impossible and therefore the literature of many ethnicities and regions have formed a type of world literature"). This should be a type of comprehensive new world literature that has been developed and formed by "the literature of many different ethnicities and regions" and which has "broken through the bias and limitations of all ethnicities." Scholars in the former Soviet Union began from this premise and stressed their belief that world literature needed to reflect the common principles of literary development through the special ethnic nature of all the types of literature.

Damrosch's theory of world literature carries on to a certain extent from Marx and Engels' theory. His most innovative aspect was suggesting that the world literature exists within ethnic literature. World literature must be transformed when it passes through the acceptance screen of a given ethnic literature. It is changed in many ways, including language, cultural practices, and modes of thinking. So there are as many world literatures as there are ethnic literatures. World literature is a dynamic, constantly regenerating concept. Its relationship with ethnic literature is not one of the center and the circle, but one of an oval track formed by the interaction between two circular centers. He believes that we should "View world literature as a covert refraction of ethnic literature. It is not a group of classic texts but rather a type of reading methodology." World literature is not comparative literature's competitor but rather a partner. World literature arises with the collision of difference and the endorsement of mutual exchange.

The "world literature" that China has spoken of for a long time is mostly a compendium of the literature of different nations, including the history of their developmental processes and their classic works. However, another "world literature" concept is also constantly developing and its inception was Lu Xun's "On the Power of Mara Poetry" (1907). Whilst studying English literature, Lu Xun specifically analyzed Byron and Shelly, "reaching all the way to Russia, where they gave rise to Pushkin, national poet of his people; when they reached Poland they created the poet of vengeance, Mickiewicz; and upon entering Hungary, they awakened the patriot poet Petöfi."[1] This obviously maintains the difference between the literatures of different ethnicities, and at the same time is also a rather innovative

[1]Lu Xun (Mara. Kowallis p. 70).

alternative world literature. When Lu Xun speaks of "What happens after Nora leaves," he is in fact speaking of "China's Ibsen" . Our old president Yang Zhouhan always maintained that when we study foreign literature we must approach it with the soul of a Chinese person. In other words, we must insert the spirit of Chinese culture into the world literature that we are studying. At the University of California, he used the Daoist view of life and death to explain Shakespeare. His words startled his audience because what he was talking about was China's Shakespeare, China's world literature. Much of our comparative literature teaching materials very early stressed the fact that we must in the context of our own ethnic literature understand the veins and lodes of world literary development. For example, if we wish to study the romanticism of Western Europe, then we must study the differences in the development of romanticism in Japan, India, and China. In other words, world literature must exist among the literature of different ethnicities.

In this sense, world literature has experienced tremendous development in China under the guise of comparative literature. It sees literature as a whole and in a cross-cultural context probes its birth and development, including the circulation and interaction of its thinking, its general tenor, its subject matter, form, and means of expression. The relatively isolated study of national literatures of the past have had new international literature elements inserted and the intersubjectivity, mutual referencing, and bidirectional exposition of comparative literature has smashed through the self-limitations of national literature. In this sense, we can also say that comparative literature *is* world literature. In fact, as Zhang Pei states in his recent work *The Liberation of Literature*: "In today's globalized world, 'literature' is inevitably 'global'." The "objective counterpart" of "literature" is the world. The world is not only "a material reality in time" but also "the existence of the world has a sort of occurrence quality." In other words, the world "is being the world": it is its own revelation and extension. In China, this new spirit of globalized world literature has permeated literary theory, literary criticism, literary history, classical literature research, modern literature research, and other discipline areas. This will undoubtedly lead to the renovation and rebuilding of the whole field of literary research.

Third: Humanity is currently experiencing multiple technical revolutions on the humanities front. This revolution is mainly expressed in the shifts in the printed textual culture and the rise of the image media culture as well as the dynamic interweaving, mutual composition, and highly tense relationship between the two. The construction of the image media culture is different to the modern humanities tradition where texts in ethnic languages are the primary carrier. It not only features ethnic characteristics but it also has a driving force and encapsulating quality that transcends any ethnic written language. The transformation in the cultural production media calls for translinguistic, transdisciplinary, and transcultural research. In her "contemporary culture and cinema research" which Dai Jinhua initiated, and the "Cinematic Culture Research Center" which she leads, two international conferences have already been convened. In addition, two of her

works have already been translated into English, and the students that she has nurtured over the past decade all already rank in this respect amongst the foremost in the world.

In sum, the cognition and aesthetics of the era of globalization and the renovation of its architecture and the confluence and development of the cultures of different ethnicities, along with drawing from the quintessence of different cultural traditions, and building a new humanistic spirit, are all today's priority tasks. Literature, and especially comparative literature, in other words, world literature, is shouldering an even more important burden than at any other time. Aristotle in Sect. 9 of his *Poetics* points out: "Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular."[2] If we say that comparative literature should return to literature, then it is this kind of literature that it should return to and not to that so-called elite existence that is divorced from society and lacks roots. In these respects, Peking University's Comparative Literature Research Institute has, over the past decade and without fanfare, silently and diligently produced a solid achievement. Peking University's largest state comparative literature project, "Sino-Foreign Literary Relations and the Development of China's Modern and Contemporary Literature," led by Chen Yuehong especially, will undoubtedly garner all of its strength and on the foundation of the past make a breakthrough contribution. I look forward to enjoying another decade of this mortal coil and, at that time, being able to join everyone in celebrating the glorious achievements of the coming decade.

[2]The Project Gutenberg EBook of Poetics, by Aristotle. A Translation by S.H. Butcher. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1974/1974–h/1974–h.htm [accessed 24/8/2015].

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